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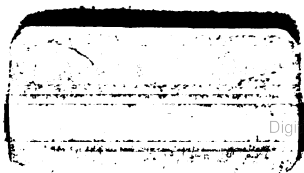
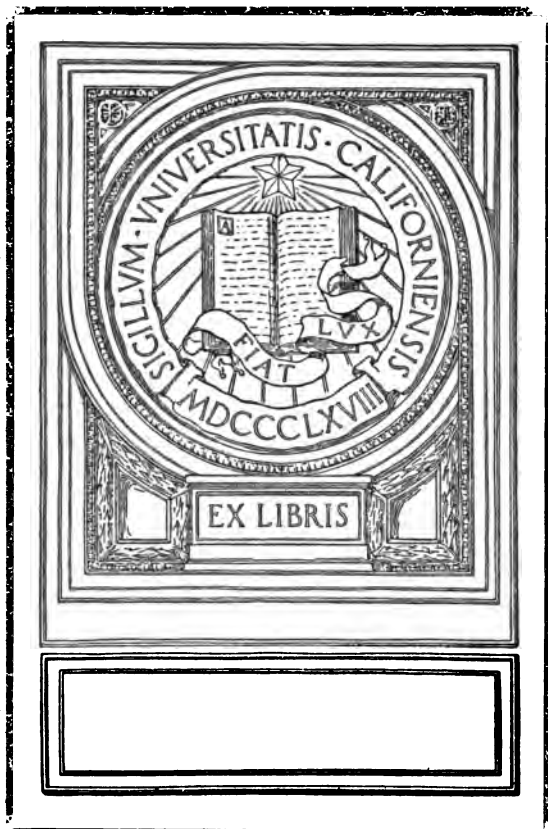
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# PRODUCE MARKETS AND MARKETING

BY  
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PRODUCE MARKETS AND MARKETING  
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## FOREWORD

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It is my sincerest wish that this volume may be found readable, helpful and instructive, at least in some measure to those connected directly or indirectly with the fruit and produce business whether as growers, shippers or dealers.

And while I may be a bit too expectant in this wish I indulge the fond hope that if some of the things I have set down in the ~~foregoing~~<sup>following</sup> chapters are carefully read and thought over they will make for better conditions, and a more profitable business for everyone who will take the pains to consider impartially what I have faithfully endeavored to emphasize in as clear a manner as the unfavorable conditions under which I have labored in their compilation would permit.

While I have it in mind I want to state that the preparation of this work has extended over several years, and has been written somewhat like Caesar's "De Bello Gallico," literally between the fights, for I presume it requires little argument to convince the average reader who is at all familiar with the maelstrom in which a busy editor gets mixed up in his routine day after day, that any undertaking, however trivial, outside his regular schedule, is sure to call upon his time and nervous energy to the extent that he is liable to give up in disgust, and that whatever is done aside from routine work must necessarily be accomplished by piecemeal.

Although my regular duties have been arduous during the period I have had the writing of this volume under way, and there have been times when I must confess I was weak of flesh, yet I have never relinquished my purpose, nor has the pleasure of thinking out the various chapters suffered one whit of diminution since the undertaking was begun a few years ago.

One thing I must emphasize here and now, and which I would like those who may read this book wholly or in part to keep in mind, is that I am dealing with principles rather than prices, with facts rather than individuals.

Principles are eternal. Men come and go, markets rise and fall, crops fail, methods change,—in short, pretty nearly everything connected with the produce business is variable and changeable, yet the underlying principles with which I have been and am chiefly concerned are as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The principles to which I refer are, of course, those which I have conceived to be underlying and governing the whole scheme of produce from a marketing standpoint, and I think no fair minded man who may have given the subject any sober thought will dispute that I am correct in saying these principles are paramount if anything like successful business is aimed at. Can it be possible that any intelligent grower, shipper, dealer or storage man will take the position at this late date that cause and effect are not in constant operation in the realm of produce, that market changes are not by any means a matter of chance, that from the sum total of human experience a rule may not be evolved which may be the means of avoiding past errors?

Oh yes, I am fully aware that certain perfectly good critics will show no mercy in "exploding" some of my "theories," as they will be pleased to call parts of my work. Let them do their worst, for, barring a few errors of minor importance which are likely to creep into any extended treatise of this nature, I am willing to stand behind what I have said in this book. All of it has been thought out soberly and at considerable length, and I fancy some of it, at least, will survive the day when some smart critics will have been relegated to the scrap pile of antiquated and forgotten produce adjuncts.

Certain reforms I have advocated to be sure. How well they will be received by the trade in general, and by certain sanctimonious hypocrites in particular, it is not becoming, perhaps, for me to say. But as I have measured trade sentiment for nearly ten years, and have come into daily touch with some of the best hearts and minds to be found in the several branches of the business, it is my belief that the reforms for which I am contending are of a progressive nature, some of which have been actually realized in part since the work was begun, and there are others which I have touched upon that are now about to be accomplished.

And let's not forget that reforms never work backward. One leads to another. We had as well take a broom and like old King Canute, whose memory lives because of his folly, try to sweep back the waves from the shore as they are heaved forth from the restless bosom of the sea as to undertake to stem the tide of reform when once begun.

I have no delight in being an iconoclast, I am sure. Yet if a Bastille is to be stormed and its moss-covered, blood-stained walls are to be

razed to the ground I must confess to a dare devil spirit which prompts me to join the vanguard that rushes in to smash its gates from their rusty hinges.

When a tadpole reaches a certain stage of development its tail drops off automatically. How greatly would the progress of civilization and commerce have been accelerated had some scheme been devised in the economy of nature for mankind to leave behind the caudal appendages we hold in common and which appear to stick to us even after we are compelled to speak of them in the past tense. I try to be an optimist; that is why I am in favor of reforms when the time comes to have them. Gentlemen, if we had never been blessed with reforms and reformers we should not have the great country in which we live today, nor even the greater civilization we enjoy,—the greatest in the history of the world.

This book is a serious matter with me; I hope the thousands of readers who may peruse its pages will also take it seriously, except where I may have digressed for a moment in lighter vein. I may also say that practically the entire work is absolutely original thought with me, coming mainly from a course of absorption of the subject matter from touching elbows daily with produce matters of one kind or another.

When I made my initial bow into the produce field nearly ten years ago, coming from the general newspaper business, it seemed that the produce line was nearly all Greek to me, as it must necessarily be to any beginner. Immediately I began casting about for some kind of book or treatise that would help me get my bearings. I looked in vain, for, alas, there was no lamp to help me find my way, though it occurred to me that there should at least be something of the nature of a hand-book covering general produce matters from a standpoint that an outsider, who might desire to get a working knowledge of the business, could do so more easily than by spending several years watching certain things which might as well be told him briefly in such a book as I have prepared.

After having been associated with produce people in my capacity as a newspaper man for a short time I had come to understand some things a bit better, and having become infatuated with the certain uncertainties always turning up, I decided to begin taking notes and reasoning out things for myself with a view to putting some of these conclusions into print. My idea of the subject became broadened wonderfully after a little thought on the matter, and I concluded that any volume that attempted to go into produce matters from a strictly technical standpoint would probably not be worth while, as it would most likely be out of date

before the ink was dry on the paper on which it was printed. Therefore, I resolved upon fixing up a sort of handbook treating of the principles which I conceived to be regulating different commodities, and to call attention briefly to certain broad characterizations in the fruit and produce field, and to touch upon various phases which I deemed of sufficient interest to be included.

It was my idea that the volume should serve a double purpose (1) in aiding many of the very people in the business themselves to reach a viewpoint that might result in their betterment by reason of certain changes in thought and action, and (2) in creating a more wholesome respect in the public mind regarding the tremendous importance of the several branches of the produce business as compared with other lines of commercial endeavor.

That many people in the trade will be more or less influenced by this book I have little doubt, for I feel confident most of it will stand the wash. But whatever the results may be, my intentions for good cannot be questioned. The right must ultimately prevail, and it has been my desire to challenge it throughout the succeeding chapters. If it becomes evident that I have served in the humble capacity of extolling effectively some of the homely virtues as they should be applied to produce affairs, I shall feel that my labors have not been altogether in vain.

Again, if I may succeed in some small degree to awaken, even indirectly, in the public mind a realization of the nature and scope of the great produce business, and its direct importance to our body politic, I shall also feel that the many weary hours I have spent pondering over the various subjects covered were better employed than if I had devoted them to some more selfish ends.

From the various chapter headings it will be easy, I believe, to determine the subjects which I intend to apply more particularly to the trade, and the same applies to the subjects which I have included more for the benefit of the general public, and although the latter chapters are merely a cursory glance at the various subjects treated, I feel that a majority of people in the trade will not consider it a waste of time after they have read them over. Certainly there are many things included in the latter chapters, as well as throughout the book here and there, which are very well known to most people directly engaged in the produce business, still I believe for the reasons set forth in the foregoing they will agree with me that it is well enough that the subjects have been included and have been handled in the way I have treated them.

It was Dickens, I believe, who said that in every author's heart of

hearts there is a favorite child of his creating, and I shall crave your forgiveness if I spoil your estimate of my whole scheme by pointing to my eulogy on the "Great American Hen" at the close of the chapter on eggs, as being the spot in my brain that is given over to the fairies so far as this work is concerned. (Page 191).

It was written on an impulse several years ago, and I might say caught out of the night and woven from the moonbeams, for on a Sunday night in the "wee sma' hours" the idea came to me and I proceeded to jot it down partly by moonlight. It is just a foible of course, but I confess with pardonable trepidity that I hope it will live after the hand that wrote it is cold and pulseless.

Should the balance of the volume prove insipid to you I shall ask that you do me the small favor of turning to this passage and running your eye over it before you toss the book aside and swear at me for thrusting it upon you.

THE AUTHOR.

P. S.—I had almost forgotten to express my thanks to my many friends all over the United States for the kindnesses rendered me in helping to provide some characteristic pictures relating to the growing, shipping and marketing of fruit and produce in the different parts of our country.





# PRODUCE MARKETS AND MARKETING

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## CHAPTER I

### THE TRADE DEFINED AND DISCUSSED

Whoever is engaged in the growing, the shipping or the selling of such articles as are usually classed in the category of fruits and produce is embraced in what may be more or less affectionately referred to as "the trade."

But it is doubtful if the average person engaged in the business has even a fairly intelligent idea of the wide meaning covered by this term when it is made to include a conglomeration of growers, shippers, commission men, jobbers, brokers, auctioneers, solicitors, storage men, speculators, etc. I shall not attempt to put a strained construction on a definition of "the trade," nor shall I endeavor to make its application more elastic than it is in reality, but I hope to establish more clearly just who may be entitled to the honor of standing up and being counted with the produce public, and tell about the functions of the different kinds of men who make up a good share of our population all over the country, and who wield a powerful influence financially and politically as we shall observe later on. I shall also make some comments on the different members of the trade which I hope will prove instructive and entertaining to the many people that I hope will read this book.

The grower is a producer. In other words he is the man who makes produce, and this is especially true with respect to the fruit and vegetable realm. I shall not go so far as to endow the producer with any super-human traits which would make him a quasi-creator. I prefer simply to class him as an agent in the hands of Providence, a kind of incident as it were in the general scheme of affairs the same as the dealer or the consumer. Intelligent growers, whether horticulturalists or merely truck growers, nowadays are more careful than formerly in making undue

claims about their importance, for they have learned to realize that even to make a success of their end of the business there must be careful co-operative work in other departments of the shipping and selling ends where trained men must do their parts of the necessary labor to complete the scheme of business.

But it would be unwise and unfair to withhold a jot or tittle of the honor and credit justly due to the men who have wrought so nobly with mind and muscle to develop the produce and fruits coming on the markets every day, and during the course of a year a number of which staple commodities taken severally run well up into the millions of dollars, to say nothing of the enormous aggregate of money involved in all kinds of fruits and produce over the entire country.

Nearly every fruit and truck grower may be put down as a farmer, but not every farmer can be called a fruit or truck grower. Long ago it became evident that the successful fruit grower must be a specialist in agriculture.

Those growers who heretofore were accustomed to regard their business as a kind of pastime and who treated matters in a haphazard way are being slowly but surely driven out of the game by a more intelligent generation of well trained and well equipped men who are doing business in a businesslike way, and who put their best thought and efforts into their calling. No better proof can be found of the increasing number of intelligent growers than is disclosed by the courses of study in our best schools and colleges devoted to horticulture, agriculture, dairying and kindred subjects. The various bulletins, pamphlets, year books etc. issued by the agricultural departments of the different states and by the general government at Washington, which are always in demand by our people, bear strong testimony in support of the conclusion that the cra of guess work and clumsy plans has given way to one where exact scientific methods produce absolutely certain effects from certain definite causes. Yet these documents are sometimes a hindrance instead of a help as we shall see later.

The frequent well attended meetings among growers in different sections of the country where vital topics are discussed also show the spirit of progress that is performing such wonders in these latter days. The numerous periodicals relating to the several phases of the growing and the marketing of fruits, vegetables and other produce, and which publications are marvels of ingenuity in some respects, also bear mute testimony to the class of men they serve. It is an axiom in journalism that a periodical must be an exponent of the clientele it serves, and I can offer no better compliment to the growers and the trade generally than

to submit in evidence the many excellent papers and magazines devoted to the growing and marketing of fruits and produce.

Surely, every man who hopes for even ordinary success should read all the good literature in his line that can be obtained and I would urge that all growers subscribe for one or more of such papers or magazines as relate to his sphere, for he will soon find he can learn a great deal from them that he could not get otherwise. Besides, there are quite a few standard authorities on different topics that no grower can afford to do without, and a small library of well selected books is a very necessary adjunct to the orchard or truck farm if the best results are to be had nowadays. Systematic study affords pleasure as well as assured profits, and the rainy days or long winter evenings can be used to good advantage in laying out plans and solving questions for which there is little time to think when the rush season is on in hot weather.

It is no aim of mine in this volume to be didactic or ultra critical, and I realize that out of the thousands who will peruse this work perhaps only a few will need to be impressed with the importance of thorough preparation for their work. But there will be a few, I hope, who have not been awakened that will be aroused, and it shall be the proudest act of my life to know I have spurred a laggard here and there to a realization of the possibilities in him and in the business he follows which should play second fiddle to no other line, I care not what it may be. In a later chapter we shall go more fully into the importance of correct information for the grower and dealer.

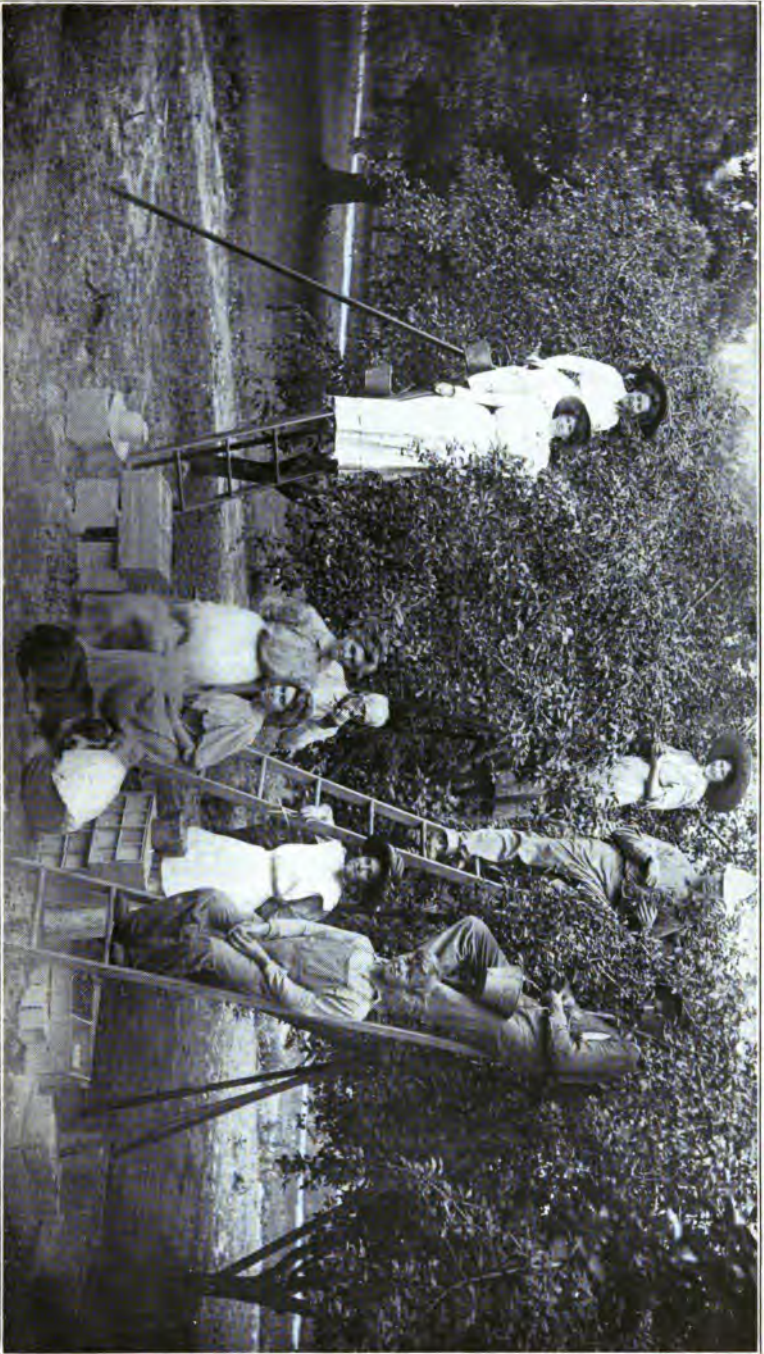
Shippers of fruits and produce are those who send shipments to market, but the term is variously used to embrace a class of widely different individuals, for not all shippers are the same, as we shall presently see. Many growers and raisers of different kind of produce are likewise shippers, but not every shipper is a grower or producer, for the business of a shipper, strictly defined, is primarily and essentially that of a buyer or concentrator. Indeed, in a great many cases the men who follow the business of shipping fruits and produce in commercial quantities, as car lots or even less, have to devote their whole time to collecting the commodities they may handle in the territory they cover, and thus make a primary market of their shipping point, as I shall point out in a subsequent chapter.

Ordinarily, shippers of all kinds of produce are divided into two classes, viz.: car lot shippers and less than car lot shippers. Some of both classes ply their trade season in and season out, while others are shippers only at such seasons as they have produce to market from their respective localities. Again, some men known as shippers of produce do not con-

fine themselves to any particular commodity for a given season only, but devote their entire time to collecting and shipping a general line of produce during such time as the products handled are available.

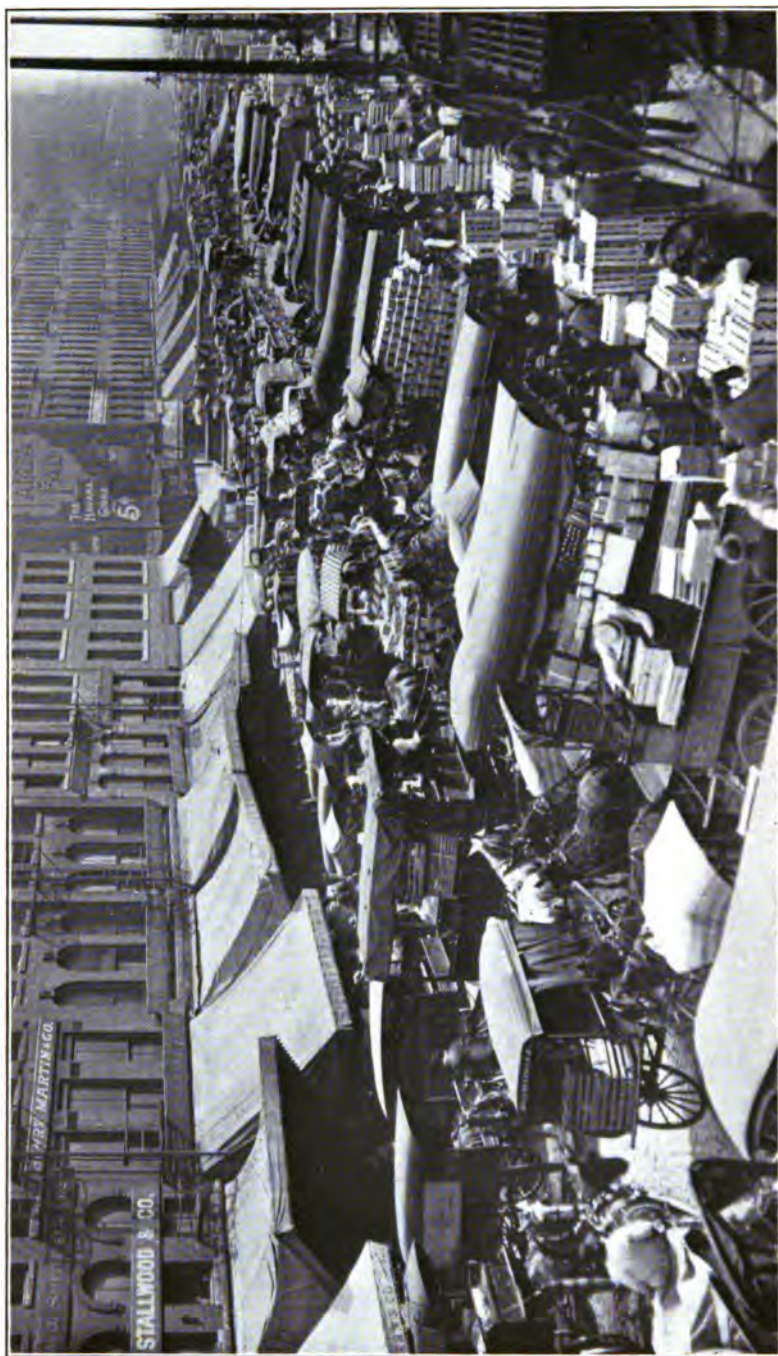
Many shippers buy and ship produce largely as an accommodation to the people with whom they trade in a retail way. Now and then a country merchant who has little or no instinct or inclination for engaging in the business of a shipper of produce finds that his rural customers have a surplus of eggs, poultry, butter, pelts, furs, etc. which they will barter for calico, coffee, tobacco, ammunition, etc. and he has a double incentive to "trade" if he can see a profit on both his purchases and his sales. There is an enormous amount of produce traffic that originates in this way, for the ever increasing supply of "raw materials" of a hundred and one different kinds is always in excess of the supply of ready cash among country people who must have "store goods." Therefore, the farmer, the trapper, the housewife, etc. in the country find it a convenience to dispose of their various wares, often of varied quality and still more varied market value, for such trinkets or staples as the country store or even town store may have to offer. This identical commercial fact was in many cases the prime motive that made the dauntless pioneer traders push westward from the Atlantic seaboard in our early history to establish trading posts where "poor Lo" could exchange skins, furs, gold, etc. for beads, firewater, and other trinkets for which he exhibited a craving. I shall not try to rake up trade acquaintance with Cartier, Daniel Boone and other celebrities of our school books with a view to changing their status in history, but I submit that trading was the chief motive which caused hundreds of early adventurers to strike out through the wilderness and brave the dangers and hardships of an unknown region inhabited by savages and wild beasts. In nearly every case the trading post was the forerunner of the settlements and the missions which later developed marvelous results from insignificant beginnings. Authorities are a unit, I believe, in the opinion that commerce is the most potent factor in spreading civilization and I subscribe fully to the theory. The handlers of produce have had their share in developing our country.

I realize that it is a digression from my subject, but I cannot refrain from making the observation that men engaged in virtually the same line of trading in the early days of our history in this country were only another type and were very similar to hundreds of produce concentrators and shippers today. And I am not going out of my way for an argument either. Points of comparison are so numerous between the trapper, the trader, etc. of early days and many concentrators and their



PICKING CHERRIES IN TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN SECTION





THE BUSIEST STREET IN THE WORLD—WEST SOUTH WATER ST. CHICAGO  
SCENE SHOWS FRUIT SECTION LATE IN DAY AFTER THE RUSH IS OVER

bands of skirmishers of the present day that they might be considered identical in some respects. Many produce men who have camped on a snow bank in recent times to round up produce, or who have faced a storm all day in a wild country to get their supplies lined up will bear me out in my position, I am sure.

But I am frank to confess that the vocation of a produce shipper nowadays is a much more business like career than the early trader could claim for his precarious calling. Indeed, there are hundreds of the very best business men today engaged in buying up or soliciting country produce which they are putting in shape for marketing and either selling to different markets, or else are putting them in storage to hold for later sale. Those who have even a slight acquaintance with the innumerable brotherhood engaged in growing, buying and shipping poultry, butter, eggs, apples, potatoes, onions and various other produce will bear witness that a more intelligent class of men than these good souls, taking them all in all, cannot be found. The business makes a man study for it is always complex and interesting.

But there are shippers and shippers. We shall see later on how one sometimes makes trouble for himself by his eagerness to get rich quick, a malady far too prevalent among our people. We shall later consider a certain type of shipper who has his weak side morally and who frequently gets himself in hot water as well as his fellows and the trade generally. We shall also take up the shipper in his numerous guises and functions, and endeavor to bring out several conclusions for him, and to offer some suggestions for his personal benefit before we shall have concluded the last chapter in this work.

The produce commission merchant is a factor or an agent who does a general receiving business and who sells goods for the account of others on a percentage basis which varies for different commodities in different markets under different conditions. However, most staple lines are practically uniform all over the country so far as the commissions go, but as I shall take up both the commission men and their commissions for frequent discussion later on I prefer to leave them for the present, for it would be impossible to bring out in this chapter certain features that are essential to a complete understanding of these people who are too often misjudged and misunderstood, but whose work and even themselves often are judged more wisely than they know.

The broker is a man who buys or sells for another and who also works on a percentage basis which is usually one-quarter of one per cent of the purchase price, or else so much a package and sometimes a bonus besides. Some articles are handled on a car lot basis. Some brokers are



receivers while others are not. A broker may be located at one place all the time, and then there is another species of broker who travels all or part of the time making such purchases or sales for his clients as he may be instructed to execute from time to time. And the broker may also travel exclusively to sell goods, for there are many brokers who are adepts at finding a market, and there are conditions which develop occasionally that make a good broker a real blessing in relieving a congested market by finding an outlet for surplus supplies. We shall also see more of the broker in subsequent chapters.

The jobber of fruits and produce is an intermediary between the wholesaler and the retailer. He handles car lots or less and sometimes both, as circumstances may require. Some jobbers deal in car lots exclusively, and a jobber must have adaptability and regulate his purchases according to the demands of his trade. His territory and his clientage may be restricted, or he may branch out everywhere if he can get orders and procure goods to fill them. Roughly speaking, the jobber keeps a "fruit house" or some other base of supply, and these are usually located in the smaller towns that make it easy to obtain and distribute all kinds of fruits and produce in certain seasons, at least throughout adjacent territory where still smaller towns are located that are not sufficiently large to buy fruits, etc. in car lots or in large wholesale lots. Wholesale receivers are often engaged part or all of the time in doing a jobbing business.

The retailer sells to the consumer. This class of traders is made up of a widely different aggregation. The retailer may have only a push cart with a few bananas, oranges, apples, etc., or he may have a stand on the street corner where a little larger stock of a slightly wider range is carried than is handled by the push cart. The retailer of fruits may also be in a cigar store where fruits are kept as a side-line, or he may be in the corner grocery or in the delicatessen store, in which two places people in cities procure most food stuffs, where outrageous prices are frequently charged for fruits and produce, and where the consumptive demand is often badly affected, as we shall see later on.

Again, the retailer may be one of that imported class of citizens who comes over steerage from Europe and who, through thrift and self denial, has accumulated enough to buy a spavined horse and a dilapidated wagon which is stocked up usually with cheap goods to be paraded daily through districts inhabited mostly by the laboring classes, and which parading is done ceremoniously to the musical chiming of a dinner bell and a choice selection of broken English announcing "Fr-e-s-h berries, peas, tomat-o-e-s, e-e-s, e-e-s fresh, ees f-r-e-s-h." But this noise is being heard less and less in our larger cities for it is clearly a nuisance.

In short, the retailer may be almost any kind of salesman who cares to undertake to sell fruits and produce. The fact that there are so many types is a safe indication of the immense business they represent in the aggregate, for be it known to all men, there is an ever increasing demand for fruits and produce that has never been fully supplied and probably never will be. But we shall also see more of this later.

In making up even an approximately complete list of the different people in the trade it would be impossible even if desirable to leave out those fellows we all know about, who for convenience are called buyers or solicitors; nobody knows exactly what they are, but still they are known to be everywhere and always in action. May the Lord bless the solicitors and prepare them a resting place hereafter, for it is a fact they have little rest on this mundane sphere, nor do they allow anyone else a rest when they drop off at an active shipping station unless they can get a shipment rolling on the next train to the houses they represent. There is a tradition in some sections of the country that when a lightning rod agent dies he undergoes a metamorphosis that evolves a fruit or produce solicitor. Certain it is that most of these solicitors are mellifluous gentlemen who can assure a score of shippers at one sitting that a porcelain door knob is a veritable hot bed on which to grow hair. Surely, if there is anything the solicitor for a produce house needs, and usually has, it is "brass," even if his firm is not always "gilt edge." But if his house is one of the kind that sends out long promises and short, slow returns, the solicitor finds that "brass" will not go, for the shippers nowadays are getting wise and the precious metals, such as gold or silver or the "long green" itself must be called into play, and the solicitor, it often happens, is no longer a solicitor for consignments, but a buyer for cash.

But because a solicitor turns buyer is no indication he does so from necessity, for it occurs now and then that in the twinkling of an eye a telegram may be flashed over the wires from headquarters telling the red hot solicitor "Buy everything in sight." How and why this happens we shall see in later discussions. But the solicitors are a good class of fellows taken all in all, and I have a firm conviction that most of them earn every penny they draw for salary and about all the items they are charged with entering for "expenses."

Another group of individuals that is entitled by all rules of law and reason to stand up with the produce public and enjoy all the rights and immunities granted to the trade is the aggregation of storage men, for the cold and common storages play a very important part in the business done by produce people, about which we shall have more or less to say later on. The storage men are scattered everywhere, but are found in

larger numbers, as they are also found more prosperous, in the larger market centers. They differ in no wise from ordinary individuals, and it must be said in plain English their ranks are made up of good and bad, although it can be stated that most of them have their hearts in the right places and their services to the trade are important and valuable.

The function of the storage is to take care of goods and provide warehouse facilities during certain seasons of the year when supplies are in excess of the consumptive demands of the country, and when a profit seems likely from investment in such commodities at ruling prices if properly stored for later sale. Further discussion of the storages and storage men is deferred in this connection.

I cannot refrain from saying a few words about the men who sell fruits and produce and who are located in the stores, on the sidewalks or throughout the various market places, or who go down on the railroad tracks or on the docks in fair weather and foul, and who must be at their places taking care of customers frequently when "the morning stars are singing together in glory."

But there is another type of salesman who travels and travels and travels. That it requires a high order of intelligence to be a successful salesman in any line is a fact admitted by all, and I think it carries an additional force when applied to the produce business. If the average shipper, and even a number of commission men themselves, realized the true worth of a good salesman the former would take off their hats in honor to the brotherhood, and I believe a great many of the latter would incline to raise the salesmen's salary and make it a universal rule for them to take Saturday afternoons off the year around if possible. Nobody who has a fair acquaintance with this class of the trade will deny that the salesmen are generally skilled in their work, faithful, conscientious, and above all things, energetic in "picking up" every sucker that passes down the row.

It is also necessary to include in our survey of the trade that vast concourse of men and women known as the "office force" who are part and parcel of the produce aggregation, for there is no getting around this fact. These people frequently develop into commission merchants, produce dealers or jobbers themselves, and not a few of the leading lights in the trade today remember well the time when they started in the business making up account sales, getting out circular letters and advising shippers on every conceivable topic, as well as performing an infinite series of chores and detail work. It is also true that numbers of successful proprietors and members of firms in the trade that are well up the ladder of success were once identified with the ranks of solicitors,

salesmen, retailers and other positions where salaries or profits were small, and where the work was probably laborious and distasteful. But the pronounced success of numbers of these men in after years proves one point that I have in mind and which I had as well express here as elsewhere; to wit, the produce business in its various branches offers splendid opportunities to the right people, and I hazard the prediction that there are more and larger fortunes to be made from this line of business in the future than have been made in the past.

The speculator is another individual who deserves a brief mention in this connection, but who will be better understood in a later chapter to be devoted mostly to his special benefit and to his peculiar line of operations, but through fear of being charged with harboring some prejudice against the speculator, which I disclaim, I prefer to stand him up at the present time in company with the balance of the trade and let him be counted.

The crook also deserves mention if for no other reason than to show that the trade is not free from the black sheep usually found in any and every line of business. I shall elaborate considerably on the crook and his methods later on, and I hope to draw some conclusions which will show that the crook is not the sole gainer through his crookedness, but that he is an educator who will one day probably be given credit for his educative value, for it cannot be gainsaid that the crooks who follow the produce business have had a wide and lasting influence in educating the trade generally. But this question is also worthy of special treatment later on and is of sufficient importance to take up a chapter in itself.

I regret that circumstances dictate my adding just one other type found in the ranks of the people whose fortunes are cast in the produce band wagon. He is no less a person than the grouch. He is hard to define, although easy to locate in some markets, and in some places he is in the plural number. To all appearances he has a torpid liver, the toothache and a congenital attack of pure cussedness; he is sore on his competitors, the trade and the public generally. He is positive of the conviction that everything is rapidly drifting to the "demnition bow-wows," and he apparently regards himself the pilot that is trying to steer all creation up Salt Creek. The most lamentable shortcoming of the grouch is that he never smiles, but that is what makes him a grouch. I wish some rule could be established whereby shippers and dealers would require commission houses and others in the trade with whom they do business to submit proof that proprietors and heads of departments of houses have made an affidavit at least once a week that they have smiled about something, and that once a month or probably once a year they be required to give bond that they will have a good laugh.

I have no special grouch for the produce grouch, for I frequently laugh at his very penuriousness, and I wish the trade everywhere would help me laugh him out of existence. I have a grave doubt if any man can be a success handling anything in the produce line who is unable to smile even when he is in wrong on a deal and is losing instead of making money.

Everybody in the trade should be cheerful, for there is no calling under the sun that needs more sunshine and sympathy than the produce business.

It is a foregone conclusion I would incur the everlasting animosity of another class of people if I should overlook grouping them in the produce procession, and you guessed right—the trade paper men.

Yes, these boys who are as keen after a story or an ad as a trout for a fly, must be allowed to go into our census.

Beyond doubt many of them are of vast benefit to all others in the trade.

## CHAPTER II

### CROOKS AND STRAIGHTS

Although we have made several classifications in the last chapter including different people engaged in the fruit and produce business, we still have another important distinction to draw which will divide the rank and file into two grand divisions, viz.: the crooks and the straights.

I see no chance for an intermediate division, as there can be no half way ground. I hold that there is no such thing in reality as near honesty. A firm or an individual must be positively straight or positively crooked, and while a good reputation is a valuable asset, it does not per se give one a passport to enter at will that realm of visions and dreams where plus is minus and minus plus, and where the truth is juggled with as a fakir does with painted balls. I make no apology for expressing the utmost contempt for some individuals and firms who are alleged to be substantial pillars in the produce business, and who sometimes exhibit a fondness for parading before the trade in a "holier than thou" attitude, but who are inwardly ravening wolves.

The commission merchant who violates his pledges, expressed or implied, neglects his duties, repudiates his obligations both moral and legal, who is fond of shielding himself behind technicalities, who has every advantage and uses it as occasion requires, is a menace to the trade at large and merits the fullest censure that can be heaped upon him.

Likewise the shipper who seeks to defraud by means of dishonest pack, who breaks faith by refusing to live up to his contracts and agreements either written or verbal, and who goes on the general theory that he must do everyone before someone does him, is also a menace to the trade and should be the recipient of hard knocks, ill luck, losses, disappointments and other jolts to show him he is a nuisance and has or should have no place in the great produce business.

But like the poor, the crooks, known and unknown, are with us always. Some are big and some are little; some operate under cover and usually

under a system that almost defies detection and punishment, and there is another and more malignant type that operates on a "catch me if you can" system. I have promised to dispense with figures and statistics else I should be strongly tempted to submit some facts about the amount of money stolen bodily every year by the dyed-in-the-wool produce crooks. From actual compilation it is known that the trade has been stuck for hundreds of thousands of dollars during the past few years by the confirmed crooks who are out for a steal, and who succeed presumably because they have the opportunity and the inclination.

How much is stolen quietly under cover and how much is "knocked down" during a twelve-month by the kid glove crowd, heaven only knows, but it would certainly total many times over what is stolen by the more daring fellows who set out for a clean up and who are game enough to give their victims a run for their money.

I trust none will be so rash as to judge from the foregoing that I mean to say that everybody in the produce business is crooked or morally deficient; I have not said as much and I never shall, for it would be untrue and I know it. There are as good men in the produce trade, and men who are as truthful, as faithful and as honorable, as can be found in any other line of business. Many of this latter kind who take the world to be honest because they are honest themselves, are often forced into measures they dislike and look upon with disfavor, but are compelled to fight the devil with fire, as it were.

The shipper or association of shippers that secures a bank guarantee or an advance covering a certain shipment by making false representations as to grade or quality of a shipment or series of shipments, and who refuse to keep faith with a commission man or buyer in a distant market by an honest adjustment of losses so caused, and deliberately too, will live to find they have stored up trouble against a day when retributive justice will certainly overtake them, and possibly with a crack over the head in one form or another.

On the contrary, the receiver who misrepresents market conditions by overquotations, or who makes a practice of padding first sales to secure heavier shipments with a view to recouping his "bait" by clipping off on averages, is only tampering with fire that will sooner or later burn his fingers and possibly retire him from business.

I fancy someone will charge me with taking this question into deep water or putting it on too narrow a plane. To such I want to emphasize that it is only a moral principle which is involved, and it should not be too deep, too narrow or too broad for anyone to see and to solve. The old, old truism that none are so blind as those who do not want to see is applicable to this question with double force.

Surely there is sound logic behind me in my argument that dishonesty does not pay in the long run, and I do not mean beyond the grave either, for I have no license to dig into the theological phase of the subject. My case is amply proved without it, so why should I rattle dry bones?

But I am sometimes given to metaphysical musings over this question of crooks and straights. I am frank to say I have no explanation to offer as to why the crooks appear to flourish and continue if dishonesty does not pay. Were I pressed to explain, I should in true Yankee style answer one question by asking another, and my question would be "Why is evil in the universe?" And I feel confident my sage interrogator would have a nut to crack that would last him awhile, but deep within whose kernel would lie the answer and the true solution.

However, I refuse to argue this theory of destiny as a mitigating circumstance for the crooks, as I believe in law and its enforcement, in order and its observance, in honesty and its reward; in short, I am one of that old fashioned, wool-hat brigade that take more or less stock in such ancient precepts as "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Understand, this declaration does not necessarily imply that the author is heading a crusade to put the whole produce trade on the "golden rule" basis, though he is firmly convinced that if it were run more nearly on that plan it would yield more pleasure as well as more legitimate profit to everyone.

But whatever else we may say of the crooks, they must be given credit for being great educators. Indeed, they are the pedagogues of the produce trade. They do more to teach shippers and the trade generally than a whole library would do at every shipping station or in every market place. When the smooth crook sends out a lot of rainbow promises on morning glory stationery to hundreds of gullible shippers; and they are caught as has been the case so often, it is a reasonably safe bet that the trick will not be repeated soon in that bailiwick, at least with the same shippers and the same crook, or even by another crook who operates in a similar way.

Before proceeding further, however, I want to go on record with the statement that actual figures from authentic sources show that losses to the trade generally from professional produce crooks are actually on the decrease compared with several years ago. This desirable state of affairs is no doubt due to several causes, but mainly to the fact that some of the oldest and shrewdest crooks have been caught, convicted and are now doing time, and to the additional fact that the trade's eyes have been opened and the old system of shooting into the dark with a blunderbuss is being abandoned for a more modern, business-like system



after which to do business. Shippers who receive flattering quotations or high offers for their produce, and dealers who are approached by letter, by wire or by personal visit from people making impossible promises and offers, have learned that it is not good judgment to try to get something for nothing. May I also be permitted to come out with the flat-footed statement that from a moral standpoint the trade has improved and is still improving? The law of evolution is at work throughout the universe, so the scientists say, and it is not hard to see where and how it could be applied with signal advantage to the produce business as heretofore conducted. Since I am a confirmed optimist and am given up to a philosophy that believes in the eternal fitness of things, I must say that I have high hopes that hundreds of people in the business will one day go into sack-cloth and ashes and come forth bringing fruits meet for repentance.

And why not? It is becoming more and more evident all the time that sharp practices and dishonest dealings do not pay. The confirmed crooks who are drifting from pillar to post, those who have evaded arrest and conviction, could tell you not only about the mental anguish they suffer, but also the enormous sums they spend to keep out of the clutches of the law. The receiver of fruits and produce whose fixed plan is to skin shippers when he has the chance, could write an excellent moral treatise showing why it is best not to do it, especially if he is approached in his declining years when he has had time for sober reflection, and when he has realized that life is too short and the stake is too small, and the pangs of conscience are too acute and lasting to make crooked dealing worth while.

I know this viewpoint is strictly ethical, but that is the only standpoint from which to look the matter squarely in the face. I disclaim all intentions of delivering a preachment or to hedge this question about with dogmatic stuff, and my sole aim is to establish a foundation on simple moral principles which are easily recognized even by a school boy once they are set out clearly before him. I trust no one will hazard a criticism on his good judgment by advancing the argument that the theory I suggest is not correct and does not hold the only proper solution which offers no compromise with dishonesty in any shape or form. I am fully aware that the bold plunge used by the daring crooks has its fascinations, and I presume the slow, certain process of robbery, taking off a bit here and a bit there as practiced by some "old houses," with a view to piling up an aggregate, also has its momentary charms, for they seem to lure the individual on and on like the song of a siren. But over and beyond this consideration of gain stands a gaunt spectre taking due notice, and who will later thrust a finger before the face of the guilty



PACKING PEARS UNDER A CANOPY IN WESTERN NEW YORK



A WASHINGTON APPLE TREE  $31\frac{1}{2}$  YEARS OLD



one and ask the pointed question "Is it worth while?" And the question is repeated from time to time under more and more awe inspiring circumstances until a negative answer is finally obtained.

But someone asks "How are we to tell what is honest and what is dishonest?" Occasions often arise that require skilled judgment to determine where legal or moral principles have been abused, and to ascertain liabilities, damages, etc. Long spun out litigation in the hands of experienced attorneys and before dignified courts often apparently amount to nothing in arriving at what is right and what is wrong. If these trained men are unable to establish rights and wrongs and apply their proper remedies, which should be based on moral remedies, then how is the ordinary individual without special training in dealing with such questions to know how best to proceed, especially in such cases where there is alleged to be a reasonable doubt as to what is right and what is wrong?

I have no desire to cast an aspersion upon our judicial system or upon the proverbial majesty of the law. But this much I do wish to say, that in many cases where simple moral questions are involved, and where any person of even ordinary intelligence should be able promptly to settle the matter at issue in a proper way, the courts frequently take days and sometimes months for deliberation, and evolve a learned opinion that does not solve the question or questions involved, but through delay and quibbling tend to lessen the respect and confidence intelligent people are supposed to have for our courts and our laws. Shrewd attorneys too often becloud the facts instead of trying to ferret out and exhibit the truth. In short, a legal battle is often no contest of law but simply one of subterfuge, diplomacy, bull-dozing courts, witnesses and jurors, and sometimes descending to downright slug-duggery.

The very essence of justice is simplicity. Conscience and reason are the two pillows on which it should and must rest. Within every brain there is a sure and quiet guide as to what is right and what is wrong, and if properly and honestly consulted, the fairly intelligent mind will always give a prompt and safe answer by which to be guided in the produce business, as in every other line. And I must say that this guide is infinitely to be preferred to all the musty statutes and court decisions that have been enacted and handed down since the time of Solon.

I think it raises no issue whatever for anyone in the trade to draw out such false arguments as "I think I have done no wrong" or "I have done nothing worse than all the rest." Such statements only reflect on one's judgment and if they are sincere their author should either be put through a Sunday School catechism or else tried on a writ of lunacy.

I repeat, dishonesty does not pay. It may cause a flare on the produce horizon that looms up like the aurora borealis, but such successes as come from dishonesty and trickery are more like shadow than substance, and will certainly be dissipated sooner or later, most likely leaving a blighting effect behind.

I had not intended to devote so much time to this phase of the subject, nor even to treat it just as I have, but I insist there is no other standpoint from which the matter can be properly seen, and it must and will be properly seen sooner or later by everyone concerned.

Too often produce crooks are born, but I incline to the belief that more crooks are made from environment than are crooked from heredity. The very nature of the business we have under discussion is one that requires trust, and trust invariably opens up an opportunity for wrong doing.

A very large percentage of the produce bought and sold year in and year out all over the country is never seen by the purchaser until he has already paid for what he has bought, and maybe the man from whom he bought did not see the goods himself. An accurate system of grading and packing would, therefore, afford a remedy for a large number of misunderstandings about the quality, value and condition of fruits and produce.

Transportation is at times a big factor in determining losses or making profits, and we shall see later on that transportation at best is always uncertain and a dangerous element to gamble on too far. But transportation has to be reckoned with, and if too slow or otherwise deficient, often gives rise to disputes that cause trouble and losses.

But even if grading and packing were put on a system that is mathematically perfect, if transportation were always sure and speedy, still the personal equations of buyer and seller have to be reckoned with, and in the last analysis we are up against the old question so often asked and so rarely answered correctly, "Am I in the hands of an honest man or an honest house?"

To undertake to enumerate the several main causes of dishonesty and sharp practices in the produce business would require more time and more space than I have at my disposal. Greed, ignorance, jealousy and pure cussedness include the leading excuses for crooked dealing, I presume, if the truth could be known why some firms and individuals choose to become its votaries.

The desire to get something for nothing, or to get rich quick, which has become so widespread in this country as to embrace well nigh all the population, is made use of both by the confirmed produce crook and

the slick gent in kid gloves, who nevertheless may masquerade as a model dealer.

It was remarked in olden times that men easily believe what they wish to be true, and I must say that the converse of this also holds good. The country merchant who has an opportunity to buy up a lot of poultry or eggs during the active shipping season and make a "mint of money," and who gets some overquotations which he knows or ought to know are out of line with common sense, and who plunges headlong into buying and shipping several cars of stock into which he has put several thousand dollars of cash money, is no doubt actuated from the same motives that inspire our grandees on the stock exchange and the promoters of various fake enterprises, for they are all looking for easy money. The only difference I see between them is that the stock jobbers and promoters usually find the money they are looking for, although they may soon part company with it to other sharpers, but the country merchant who had dreams about retiring from business on his poultry or egg profits is generally left without his investment even, to say nothing of his prospective gain. I shall not try to disprove that the expectant merchant is a wiser although a poorer man, and it is dollars to doughnuts that he profits from the experience referred to. There are hundreds of these fellows over the country too.

I think it fair and proper in this connection to make the statement that after observing carefully for several years all kinds of produce people and their methods, I am convinced some men do questionable things not from choice but from apparent necessity which is brought about by insane competition often too malignant and widespread in the trade.

Sometimes it is a fierce struggle in the produce game to obtain new business and, forsooth, to hold old business. In a growing section where shipments are being lined up by commission men, say upon a three per cent rebate to local agents for soliciting consignments, a certain competitor of a certain house in a certain market who is either not "in" on that section, or who does not secure as much business there as he wants and thinks he should have, will have a representative visit the section in question and go his competitor one better by giving a four per cent rebate to the local who has the influence, and is using it to throw too much business to the house he has lately solicited for on a three per cent basis. What will the house do that has been paying three per cent? In all probability the rebate of three per cent takes nearly half of the straight commission, and it requires every penny of the balance realized from commissions arising from sales of goods to conduct an honest business.

What is the result?

Competition must be met?

It must?

Then why not continue this folly and undertake to sell the shipments at destination for absolutely no commissions and still give a rebate? Such could be done as well as to allow insane, underhand methods to make the rebate so large as to absorb the legitimate profits arising from handling the goods by an honest commission house. Too often it has been the case when a state of affairs arise such as I have indicated, that the house rebating three per cent in the first instance will meet the competition, and give the local five per cent rebate, but it is a safe bet somebody pays the bill if a loss results to the house in handling the shipments, and it easily can be seen that the cost, which is the loss in this case, must and will be figured out of the business some way. We leave out of consideration the matter of allowing a fair profit to the commission house,—here we draw the veil and will forbear even the suggestion of a steal. And if stealing is done what is the cause? What can it be but insane competition? For this malady there should be a remedy, and in a later chapter I shall suggest one.

Likewise, an honest commission man who knows it is wrong to "pad" or "stuff" account sales to make it appear that first shipments sell for more than they actually bring in order to secure heavy shipments later, may have no choice in so doing, but if he knows you well he will probably explain confidentially that he has to pad and stuff sales or his "padding" competitor will get all his business away from him.

Although I cannot accept insane competition as a legitimate excuse for questionable practice, still we had as well acknowledge it as a cause for immorality and condemn it as vehemently as possible. All forms of temptation which tend to make produce people err should be restricted so far as possible and totally removed when they can be dispensed with. Whether moral restraints can be established by co-operation among the better element in the trade so as to provide a remedy, or whether a rigid federal regulation governing commission men and their commissions will best accomplish it, or whether some other plan should be adopted, will come up for full discussion before this work is finished.

I have said a good deal about the crooks in the trade and I shall have more to say later. The straights are not being slighted by me on purpose owing to any failure of appreciation of their virtue. Considering them I have proceeded on the assumption that those who are whole need not a physician.

But there are lots of straights in the trade, although I do not know

them all. Nobody does. Let us rest in the assurance that there is an Eye that sees; and seeing, knows; and knowing, will judge and judge aright.

And let us be broad enough and charitable enough to hope that some day it will all come right, and there shall be no more crooks, but all the ways shall be straight and pleasant and eternal, and that all produce men shall delight in walking in that manner.

There may be a millennium in the produce trade some day. Who knows? It is not impossible, but it can only come when men are honest with themselves as well as with everyone else.



### CHAPTER III

## THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF MARKETS

In the matter of making and maintaining a market it is quite evident that there must be a buyer and a seller. It is also necessary that the former have the wherewithal to buy or to give in exchange, and it is also essential that the latter have something of value to barter or offer for sale.

When these two conditions are fulfilled with respect to the vendor and vendee, the next essential thing is that a basis of exchange be established and recognized as a guide for trading. This is only another way of expressing the matter of price. Reduced to its last analysis, a price should always be a true exponent of value. It is unfortunate, however, that such is not always the case, for it often occurs, as we shall see later on, that prices and market quotations frequently serve rather to conceal than to reflect actual values and market conditions.

Of course, the prices asked and given in handling different articles of fruits and produce, or any other article for that matter, may be influenced by different causes that are so numerous and varied as almost to defy classification and description.

Whatever else may be said about prices, it is clear that they serve as a kind of barometer for business, and must be accepted as a criterion for good or bad trading and serve to stimulate business or make trading slow up. We shall observe later that some of the different elements which have an important bearing on the matter of prices are not always to be found on the surface, but have to be looked for with the eye of an analyst, and that certain factors have to be subdivided if we are to really understand thoroughly the proposition we are dealing with. It would be impossible in this connection to go into a full discussion or even to enumerate anything like all of the factors that must be considered. They can be better taken up in other chapters for thorough discussion.

It has been very truthfully as well as tersely stated that a thing is

worth what it will fetch. But the ruling price of a given commodity may not represent the actual inherent value of the article unless we confine all discussion of values strictly to the present tense. In view of the fact that nearly all commodities embraced in the produce business are of a more or less perishable nature, and owing to the fact that the business is highly speculative within itself, it is quite evident that prices fluctuate to keep track of values which are ever-changing and which constitute a study in themselves that may well engage the most astute reasoning that can be applied to economics and trade.

Prices that are being asked and given today for any produce commodity may or may not represent the actual value of the commodity in question, as we shall see later. But values and prices of different articles have been frequently confused to the undoing of not a few, as I hope to emphasize in this and other chapters treating on the handling of fruits and produce.

Indeed, it is no easy matter always to say whether or not ruling prices exceed actual values or vice versa, for what may be true of a staple article like apples during the present season, may be, and almost to a certainty, will be very different from the conditions that will prevail and govern next year, the year after and ever after. Perhaps this one feature of constant change is an essential factor in making the produce business such a luring game. The true perspective is nearly always difficult to draw, and like a kaleidoscope, is constantly changing and different at every turn, the last always appearing to be the most brilliant in color and the most beautiful in design, especially when things are running smoothly and nice profits are forthcoming.

After all, the ruling price for a given commodity only means that traders, investors, speculators or any other name you may please to call purchasers who buy for immediate or future use, have put their seal of approval on the opinion that a given commodity selling at a given price is worth the value indicated by that price.

As a general rule good prices mean good business in any market for any commodity, but there is such a thing as getting prices too high so that speculative buying runs riot and intrinsic values are forgotten or else submerged for the time being, and a period of retrenchment or reaction may be expected to follow an erratic spell when prices and values have been estranged temporarily.

Of course, the prices asked and given in handling different articles of fruits and produce or any other article may be influenced in an upward or downward way by different causes, all of which would be really hard to single out and give their proper value in making up the market.

The simple question: "Why do prices change?" opens up an unlimited field for discussion, but those accustomed to taking a superficial view of matters appear to be quite satisfied to attribute the condition of any market to supply and demand as the two ruling factors, and apparently never care to trouble themselves with analyzing these two factors to see what influences are responsible for their existence, and which perhaps indirectly results in the favorable or unfavorable trend of the market from time to time.

It is readily conceded that supply and demand are constantly dictating the fixing of prices, but this axiom about supply and demand ruling prices only states half the truth, and he is short-sighted indeed who is unable to see that supply and demand are themselves capable of almost infinite analysis and subdivision.

It frequently happens that a minor member of either leading factor which is grouped for convenience under supply or demand, looms up as a great influence in making prices go up or down, and although the over or under-supply, or the demand or lack of it, may be designated for convenience as the real cause for the upward or downward tendency in prices, still the close observer is bound to see that something over and above the sheer supply and demand themselves is in operation with telling force. To say the least, a careful reasoner on market matters should look beneath the surface of these two factors if he cares to get a proper grasp of market conditions and profit in the future from past experience, preventing the repetition of mistakes which probably could have been avoided if he had devoted a little more gray matter to the business he has in hand.

Too often the weather is overlooked as a potent and far-reaching influence in making and breaking the markets for different produce commodities. Those of long experience know that certain articles are sometimes in slow demand, and that it is difficult to assign a cause for this sluggish condition until the weather is taken into account.

Not only does prevailing weather for the time being affect the consumptive requirements for different kinds of produce through its indirect influence on the consuming public at the time a given article is being placed on the market, but it should also be borne in mind that weather conditions have a very far-reaching effect in the producing of good or bad quality in different kinds of produce that are to be placed on the market at some later date, and which produce may meet with poor sale during good weather for selling, owing to inferior quality coming as a direct result from unfavorable weather conditions when the commodity in question was being grown or prepared for market.

I think it cannot be disproved that the weather is the most important

influence affecting or relating to supply and demand, for it may influence either or both, directly or indirectly.

It frequently occurs that in the face of a heavy supply of a given commodity the market maintains an activity and a firmness which can hardly be accounted for. Naturally, there must be some buying demand, or speculative demand if you please, else the market would collapse. A good many people in the trade simply characterize the situation by saying there is a good demand, and lose sight of the unique situation, in that supplies are heavy with prices ruling higher than they would ordinarily under normal conditions, and never so much as stop to inquire why the demand is in the market when one would naturally expect, under such conditions, a slower selling at lower prices.

After all, there is a very unique relation which supplies and values should sustain to each other on the one hand, and on the other hand, demand and prices are found to be similarly related.

Forsooth, the matter of supply determines the value. It might be stated with equal truth that demand fixes the price.

We could with mathematical accuracy write the formula out by proportion that would run something like this: As the supply is to the value, so is the demand to the price. The last member of the equation is always comparatively easy to get at; the first member is difficult to establish because it is an unknown variable in most cases. Largely, it is a case of adapting the mental to the material.

I think it cannot be successfully contradicted that values are determined by supply whether we realize it or not, but we certainly do realize that the demand fixes the price. Values are real, prices may be fictitious; a supply is a fact, a demand may be a fancy, as many of the speculators in produce commodities could bear witness.

We are bound to agree that the supply of any produce commodity may be affected in a score of different ways, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to make the same statement with regard to the demand, for as we have seen, they are capable of subdivision, and must be subdivided if they are to be intelligently studied or correctly understood. I am frank to confess that I believe the coming generation will be able to calculate more nicely the nature and scope of the various subdivisions of these two factors, and I fancy some startling discoveries may be brought to light sooner or later.

The purchasing power of the consuming public is easily one of the most important things to be considered in summing up the question of demand, but now and then a whim on the part of the general public is exhibited for or against a certain commodity, and the author believes the

causes of these whims can better be traced in the field of psychology, although he thinks it proper to call attention to them in this connection, for they are known to be in constant operation.

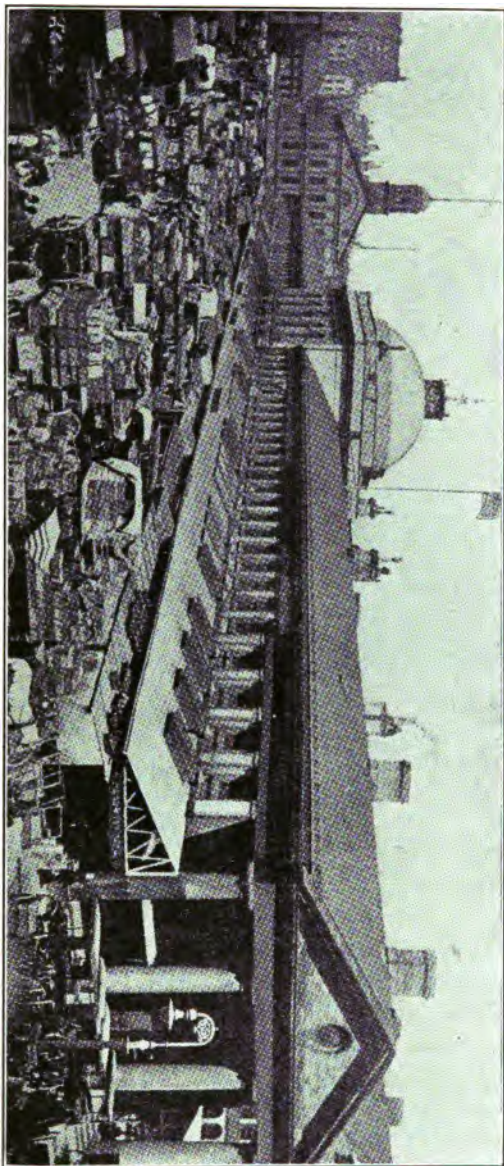
Why the consuming public will take considerably more of a given commodity, for example apples or eggs, even at a higher price under certain conditions than under other similar conditions at another time, is a problem that some psychologist of the future generation may be able to trace out and solve more correctly when complete scientific investigation relating to sentiment as applied to people in the aggregate has been made, and it is established that these whims are not due to haphazard or caprice, but are traceable to certain fixed laws which are now unknown except in their effects.

And I fancy somebody will raise the point that all of this is far-fetched and visionary. It is. But what is a market but a matter of opinion? It is mental, not material. Markets simply change because men's minds do. If all conclusions and opinions were correct we might as well expect stationary prices except where there would be a surplus or a scarcity of a given commodity that might result in higher or lower prices temporarily.

But it is perhaps fortunate for the rank and file of mankind that everybody does not reason correctly and that wrong opinions, which result in the undoing of some folks, give somebody else who possesses the knack of reasoning more closely, the opportunity to make a profit from the mistakes of their less fortunate fellow creatures. Mind you, I have not said that this is right or is like things ought to be. But I am not responsible for the conditions; I simply call attention to their existence and some of the possibilities they open up.

When everybody in the produce business possesses a reasonable share of that most uncommon kind of sense—common sense—there will be less violent fluctuations in the market, for there will be fewer speculators.

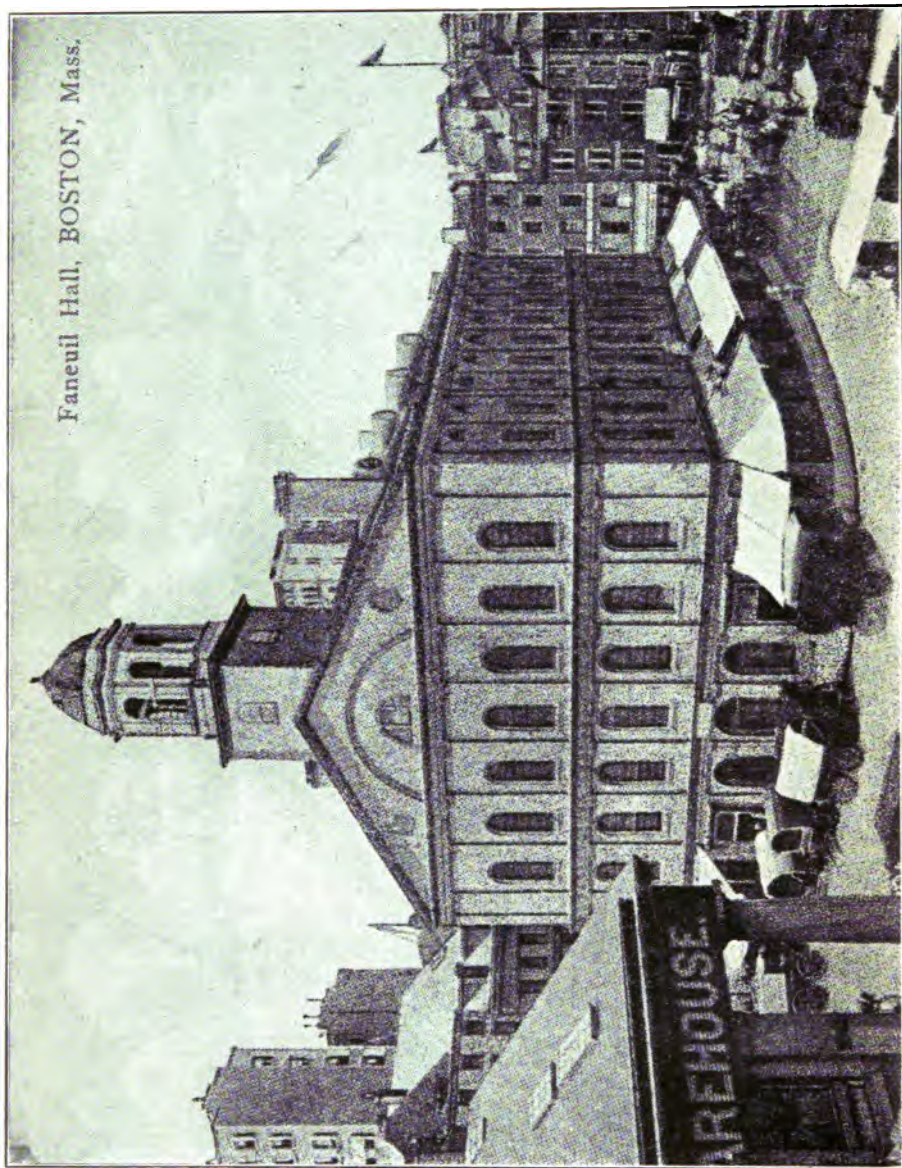
When the trade at large pays at least some attention to the elementary principles of psychology a lot of things which are now shrouded in mystery will become more or less simple, and will therefore be the more easily controlled. To better illustrate the thought in mind we might refer to electricity, that subtle force which always existed everywhere and which nobody doubted. Yet its potentiality and practical uses were unknown until the principles which underlie its generation and control had been mastered and harnessed. The same old force which broke out occasionally and flashed through the sky for ages and ages has been bridled and shackled, and it does our bidding in supplying our needs and meeting our wishes in a thousand different ways. We have come to master it by discovering its inner nature. Some will probably fail to grasp the thought



QUINCY MARKET, BOSTON, MASS.—THE OLDEST MARKET IN THIS COUNTRY—IT IS OWNED  
AND KEPT UP BY THE CITY—FANEUIL HALL IN THE BACKGROUND



Faneuil Hall, BOSTON, Mass.



THE CRADLE OF AMERICAN LIBERTY IS NOW GIVEN OVER TO THE PRODUCE TRADE

in the author's mind, but he has no doubt the great majority of readers will see the point, and he hopes there will be some profit from the illustration so far as mastering markets go.

What is needed among produce people is a more intelligent study of the science of marketing. And this study is bound to lead to an analysis of the relation between supplies and values, as compared with the connection between demand and prices. In all the making and breaking of markets there are fixed laws in operation, and the more closely these laws are studied and complied with the better for all concerned, especially for the speculators who have paid to fix prices or force markets on some occasions when they later find they have strained the relations between prices and values, between the supply and the demand, to the breaking point.

The subject of speculation is too important and far-reaching to receive proper treatment in this connection, and I deem it necessary to take up the subject in a later chapter so as to draw a distinction between speculation and legitimate business, and set down some other observations which may not come amiss. Yet it may be stated here that speculation is merely an effort to anticipate the meeting of prices and values.

Going back a little way to the subject of actual trading and actual markets, we must agree that the inspiration of all trading lies in the matter of making a profit.

The prime motive which governs the commission merchant or the produce dealer in the conduct of his business is that of gain. The same applies, of course, to the producer, grower and shipper. In short, the whole scheme of business depends on the question of dollars and cents, and it is a matter of fact that unless a fair profit is realized on the capital and labor invested, business itself must be discontinued.

Therefore, the produce buyer whether at wholesale or at retail, purchases wholly from the standpoint of an investment, and the seller parts company with his goods in view of a profit. However, it must be admitted that sales of various fruits and produce are sometimes made to prevent losses rather than with a profit in view. But this last named species of sale can hardly be listed with the usual run of transactions, for they are nothing more or less than sacrifices, although they may be prompted by good judgment to protect money invested. Frequently a line of goods is moved either in a primary or distributing center on a close margin because their owner, or agent having charge of their sale, may believe he is assuming considerable risk in holding a perishable commodity for later sale, fearing a possible deterioration in quality or a threatened decline in the market.



But as a usual thing there are really few bargains in the produce business as the word is generally understood. By this I mean downright, willful sacrifices of values. In other words, most people engaged in every branch of trade understand that business is business, which, being translated into everyday English, means no one is trading for his health alone, and there is no excuse or apology necessary for this apparently sordid view of matters, as it is the profit—the dollar—that animates and moves the grower, shipper, buyer and seller under nearly all conditions, and enables them all to survive and continue the scheme of growing, shipping and selling. To do business that involves swapping dollars surely is scant encouragement, and worse still is the taking of losses which result too frequently, and which are nearly always induced by speculators who have failed or refused to learn that prices and values are by no means identical, and that the prevailing demand and apparent supply should not always dictate the plan of action they should follow.

In the matter of buying and selling, we might say that the best time to buy is when others want to sell, and vice versa. Unfortunately, this rule cannot be followed blindly, but as a general proposition its correctness will stand the test of time.

Relatively speaking, there are cycles or periods of time in which certain articles in the produce field have to be bought and sold if a profit is to be expected. But now and then it happens that a nervy trader will prolong his operations and hit things right for a big killing after the statute of limitations has expired in a given commodity for a given season. But these occurrences are chiefly notable for their infrequency, and are, therefore, bad business because of their uncertainty. Speculators have been fooled time and again by drifting with the current, or possibly depending on the steam rising from their heated imaginations for ability to travel in whatever direction they hoped the market would go. We shall go into this further when we come to consider speculation per se.

While we are discussing the matter of markets we might profitably inquire into the nature and character of some of the markets, or market places, involved in the concentration and the distribution of the thousand and one kinds of fruits and produce, for there are possibly a few details and points that may be worth while to set down in this connection.

All markets may be divided into two classes.

The first may be considered as a primary or initial market where goods originate in commercial quantities, and this class includes such places as loading stations, creameries, packing plants, orchards, etc. In other words, wherever produce, of whatever kind, may be grown, produced, packed or shipped.

The second kind may be designated as secondary or distributing centers, and are usually understood to be such markets as handle wholesale lots of various kinds of produce, either for immediate or future distribution for consumptive requirements.

All markets have feelings or tones, which are said to be firm, steady, easy or weak, according to the sentiment among buyers and sellers as varying circumstances may dictate.

A firm or strong market is understood to mean one where holders of goods are firm in their ideas about prices relating to a given commodity, and under a firm feeling the price is not subject to a decline, but rather tends upward.

A steady market is a shade weaker than the one just referred to, but the steady feeling also indicates a very healthy condition in business.

An easy market means buyers have little trouble in finding sellers of a given commodity at established quotations, and usually indicates that prices may be shaded to make sales.

A weak market means that a decline in price is likely, and the feeling is generally weak as to maintaining established quotations relating to some particular commodity. To quote a market as being weak is only another way of predicting a decline unless some unexpected change develops.

A dull market usually means about the same as an easy or weak situation, but without a pronounced weak feeling.

A market that has been forced is one that is usually the outgrowth of an abnormal demand which usually results from those who are in possession of a sufficient volume of supplies, going to the extreme of forcing buyers to pay more than the actual values would dictate under normal conditions.

All markets are subject largely to the same influences in their making or unmaking, although local conditions may affect different markets in a varying degree. But as a general proposition the larger market centers exert far more influence on sentiment and prices than the primary markets, yet the larger market centers are often subject to fluctuations that sometimes fail to reach the primary markets with their influence in this respect.

But as a usual thing what hurts or helps one market extends to others that handle the same commodity, for the present network of transportation lines and the different media for exchange of information have actually converted the entire country into one big market, and sales are taking place every hour in the day involving carlots, sometimes trainloads, of different fruits and produce in transit all over the continent.

Now, after considering the matter of markets from several angles in

the brief survey of the subject as we necessarily have taken, the author believes that the most important thing yet remains to be said regarding sentiment as a controlling factor in the making and unmaking of markets, and I hardly feel that the subject could be dropped without some reference to this essential element as a factor in shaping trade conditions.

Sentiment is purely mental, not material, and those who have not made a careful study of the subject can hardly understand or appreciate the effect of this subtle element, not only in produce matters, but in commerce generally. And I may say that in many cases it applies much more strongly to the produce business than to some other lines of trade, because of the fact that the produce business is highly speculative, especially for different commodities at different seasons, and under varied conditions as they must necessarily exist.

Sentiment is ever present in all markets and it exerts an influence on the price of every commodity, although that influence may be more or less pronounced in different circumstances.

Sentiment may be considered as a slender silken thread by which a commodity may be raised higher and higher if the tension is not too strong on the delicate fiber; but when overloaded snaps suddenly, sets the law of gravity in rapid operation and sends things to the bottom with a crash. You can doubt the presence of sentiment if you wish; you can deny its influence if you prefer; but it can never be discounted, and the wise trader in the produce business knows he must regard sentiment literally as the North Star of commerce.

As a matter of fact, it is a criticism on one's intelligence to run counter to sentiment too far or too strong, although it sometimes happens that the entire produce trade is wrong in its conclusions about the intrinsic values of certain commodities, and about other matters, the same as the great public at large is wrong now and then regarding politics, theology, law and various other propositions.

But I insist that as a general rule sentiment must be heeded, for he is playing with live coals and gun-powder who is so bold as not to recognize and respect sentiment because of its powerful influence on business. It is far from my purpose to make a fetich of sentiment, for it is clearly the creature and not the creator. Sentiment is great, but the man who makes it is greater. A single individual can and often does create sentiment or change it on occasions when it is wrong, sometimes even when it is right. But once sentiment is founded on fact, becomes congealed and is well established, its effect on prices, making for riches or ruin, can rarely be doubted or discarded, and it is of this truthful sentiment to which I have special reference when I speak of its potentiality.

But even if sentiment is false and at the same time widespread, it may be as much as one's fortune is worth to try to stem it, as it is well nigh a fact, though founded on false premises, if everyone believes or feels a certain way with reference to a given commodity, and that feeling runs counter to a guess upon which to hazard a good sum of money in speculation, especially if the season is drawing near a close when the commodity in which money is invested must be sold in order to prevent a loss.

## CHAPTER IV

### SPECULATION

It is a fact generally recognized, I believe, that the entire produce business from start to finish is more or less speculative, and therefore, more or less a gamble.

But the term speculation as applied to the stock exchange or the grain pit is not identical with the game of chance we find in growing, packing, shipping or dealing in produce, yet it is the element of chance that enters into both which makes the respective lines hazardous to a degree.

Doubtless the main cause of the speculative nature of the produce business is to be found in the highly perishable nature of the many commodities classed as fruits and produce.

But aside from this the element of probability extends even to the growing and producing of all kinds of produce commodities. There are so many different factors to be reckoned with all along the line in every branch that it can almost be stated without fear of successful contradiction that nothing is sure in this business until it has happened, and you are sure that it has happened.

Therefore, it is not strange, but on the contrary very natural, that there will be speculation where the field is so inviting, for man by natural instinct is somewhat a gambler. I shall be fair enough, however, to spare the feelings of those who may take issue on this score, for I know a great many men in the trade studiously avoid a game of chance; yet I submit that every time they stake a sum of money on a car of apples or a lot of eggs, or on a growing crop, they are only putting up so much money against a higher card, as it were, and their number is legion who have patiently watched the deal and have seen their profits and often their stakes swept away by a cruel ace, and now and then just a plain deuce is all that is required to make one lose his money—sometimes his religion too.

It is quite true the element of probability is not encouraged by the trade

at large for the sheer fun of gambling, but it is inherent in the very nature of the business that there must be downs as well as ups,—losses as well as profits.

A freeze over night may change the scheme of business in a hundred markets and may affect prices or values, maybe both, for a score of different articles, maybe for a day, maybe for a season. A heavy rain or storm may ruin the combined results of capital and labor expended with great skill in a promising produce investment.

We have already noted the far-reaching effects of the weather on markets, and it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the weather is the greatest single factor that is in constant operation directly or indirectly in making or losing fortunes in produce. To make myself clear I should say the uncertainties of the weather induce speculation.

But it is an ill wind that blows good to nobody. What is the loss of one is often the gain of another. Severe injury to the Florida orange crop only means that there will be a heavier demand for oranges from California or from some place else, provided they can be had. Injury to the poultry crop in Iowa is a forerunner of better prices for poultry from Missouri, Kansas and elsewhere.

These circumstances, which might be cited and varied indefinitely, only serve to emphasize the original proposition that the produce business is more or less of a gamble. About the only advantage that poker or faro can claim over the produce business is that the latter is usually more long drawn out and more nerve racking and torturing when it goes wrong. But when it goes right and you make a "ten strike," sometimes you can hardly be resuscitated from a sinking spell due to suspense so as to hear the glad news.

However, there is one sweet consolation from a comparison of an out and out gamble and the quasi-gamble in the produce business, and that is the "sure thing" of the con man will break you to a certainty if you go against it long enough and strong enough, but in the produce business some men win although they follow the business purely in a speculative way, and there are not a few who reduce the element of chance to a minimum and make startling successes in one line or another.

In this connection, I think it worth while to set at rest some impressions that appear to have gained currency to the effect that the produce business is a sort of gold mine or an adjunct of the treasury department at Washington because of its opportunities in speculating. We frequently hear of a bold plunge in a certain commodity which results in fabulous profits, and the lucky individual or individuals promoting the deal, are showered with congratulations for their nerve and foresight. But we

rarely see anything printed or hear a word about the fellows that go against the game and lose.

There are numerous wrecks lying in the wake of this alluring business which are monuments to the god of failure. Indeed, it is recounted in the annals of the trade that in times gone by many a firm have set their barks adrift at the firing of the morning gun, with sails spread high and wide over as well manned and sea-worthy argosies as ever plied the Cathay coast for gold and indigo in the classic days of yore,—a clear sky above, a smooth sea ahead, and the barks, they say, proceeded on their way for a time, safe, serene and rejoicing. But towards high noon a gathering storm descended and the tossing ships were at the mercy of the waves; before an hour passed they were driven on an uncharted rock, and before the next setting sun the cargo and crew were dashed to pieces and floated hither and thither by the surging billows and howling winds. When drifting spar and wreckage washed ashore in the calm that followed the storm, the world paused and wondered how it could have happened so suddenly, so sadly and with so little warning! And still these argosies are being put to sea nearly every day!

But it cannot be denied that reasonably sure returns are always forthcoming from the conduct of a legitimate business handling fruits and produce either in a large or in a small market if proper limitations are put on the volume of business to be handled with the capital invested, and proper allowances are made for the personal equation, which after all, is the most vital influence in the commercial world, as in every other line of human endeavor; and other things being equal, the right man in charge of a business is more essential than having a large amount of money invested. Maybe I am wrong, but I have always been possessed of the idea that things have a knack at shaping themselves for the convenience and profit of some men.

I know it is a current opinion in some quarters that as a general rule no great amount of money ever has been or ever will be accumulated by firms or individuals engaged in the produce business, but I think it only necessary to refer en masse to the hundreds of leading firms over the country who have built lasting monuments to themselves in the successes they have achieved, who began in a small way perhaps, but who, through sheer pluck and energy coupled with an honest purpose, have forged steadily to the front and have not only made money for themselves, but have rendered a real service to their countrymen in helping to find markets for numerous products that would certainly have gone to waste year after year were it not for the diligent effort on their part in finding a profitable outlet for the surplus products of farms, orchards, barnyards, dairies,

vineyards and other sources of supply that dot the hillsides and checker the landscapes from one end of this good country to the other, and in many cases risking their good money to do so.

I think there is little foundation for the idea that money cannot be made out of every branch of the fruit and produce business where proper judgment and energy are used, for I am sure there are too many prosperous and successful growers, shippers and dealers in every community and every market center to allow any but the prejudiced to share the opinion that a reasonable competence, if not a neat fortune, cannot be honestly accumulated if a proper system is worked out and followed, and correct methods of trading are adhered to, even with a line that is so highly speculative as most branches of the produce trade become at some stages and in some seasons.

Of course, I might cite hundreds of examples of really successful people in the trade, despite its speculative tendencies, but I think it unnecessary to single them out, as they are already conspicuous enough before the produce public to support the argument I make, viz.: that the great produce field offers as many if not more opportunities for success to the individual or firm with a small capital than can be found in the average commercial line today where it frequently requires an enormous outlay of money and infinite pains to secure a comparatively small profit on a season's business.

But if I were asked to point out the most dangerous pitfall for produce people I would unhesitatingly say that the fever of speculation is the cause of more downfalls, and puts more people in hot water temporarily and sometimes indefinitely, than all other causes combined. Yet speculation is often perfectly legitimate and is sometimes necessary if a campaign of trading is to be successful. The main trouble with this element is that it is too frequently allowed to run riot and entirely supplant candid judgment in deciding what is best to do. It must be admitted that there is difficulty in drawing a clear idea as to what constitutes business and what is purely speculation, especially when we are considering a line that is so largely speculative from start to finish.

But he that is so foolish as to tamper with the speculative microbe too much and inoculates his system thoroughly, without possessing a knack for the task, is sooner or later blinded and burned just as the moth, lured by the glare of the candle, is coaxed to its ruin. But not all speculation is ruinous as we have observed, nor are all of its votaries rewarded with ignominious failure.

There are types of speculation as well as types of speculators.

First, everybody may be considered a speculator to some extent when



he is engaged in a line of business that is in itself more or less a game of chance. Then there is the intermittent speculator who drops in and out as circumstances and his judgment may dictate. He is usually calm and calculating, and he is the only real speculator worth considering. He generally wants to play a sure thing and will take the right chance apparently at heavy odds against him. Like all gamblers, he reduces the element of chance to a minimum, and when he sees he has a 100 to 1 shot he prefers to go fishing, or spend awhile looking over the beauties of nature and let his money rest. In other words, he has a set of brains and he uses his thinking apparatus day in and day out. He knows the value of correct information and will not act without ascertaining his bearings; he is willing to pay for a "look-in," and he is slow to hand out tips, preferring to use them himself. What is more important still, the real speculator will not attempt the impossible. When he finds he is in wrong he gets out with as little loss or damage as possible, for even the best speculators get fooled now and then, and it sometimes happens they are fooled the worst on what seems a sure thing. The very uncertainty of the produce business might be termed its chief characteristic.

But the sensible, thinking speculator in produce lines who leaves no stone unturned to know every phase of his deal, is a hard man to beat at his own game. He thinks hard before he acts, and if he sees a big doubt he is slow to act at all.

The speculator who makes most trouble for himself and others is the malignant type that may be classed as a dyed-in-the-wool gambler who has it in his blood and in his bones to gamble, and who will lay you 1 to 2 that the sun will rise in the west tomorrow.

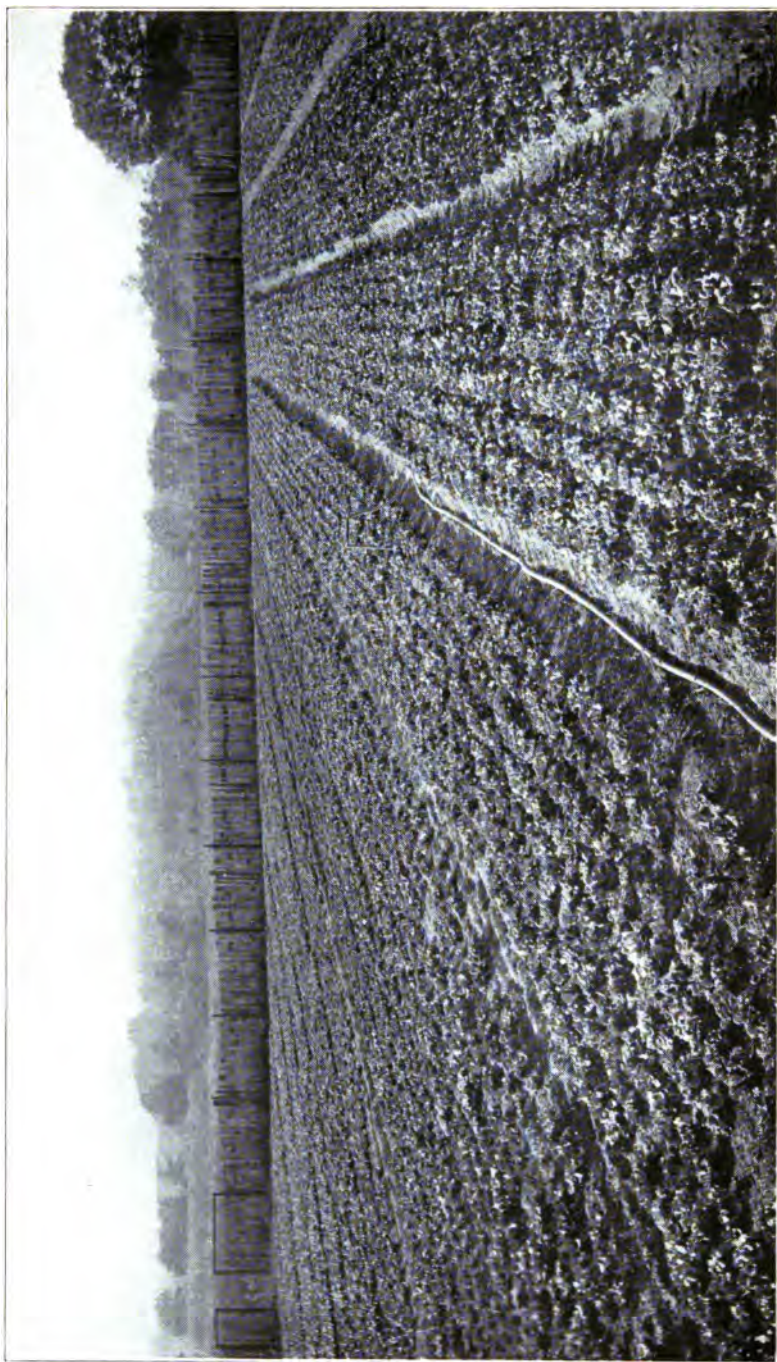
I regret to say some men who class themselves in the produce trade are often guilty of entering deals about as impossible as the "sun rise" bet. It is difficult to say if sheer ignorance or a chronic gambling spirit is most largely responsible for the hazardous deals we occasionally run across in the business. Certainly it is a lack of gray matter whichever may be the cause.

The grower or shipper that hooks up with a broker or dealer that is notorious for questionable operations may do so from ignorance, but it can hardly be denied that the aforesaid grower or shipper is gambling that he will not get skinned. It is very easy to see the element of speculation could be lessened in such cases if proper efforts were made to find out the reliability of the tricky broker or dealer before putting up the stake, which is more or less a contribution to the general educational fund.

Again, the tin horn produce gambler who figures he and his clique constitute a controlling interest in the market, and who sinks all the money



A LOAD OF MICHIGAN GRAPE AT THE PLATFORM



SPINACH PATCH IN APRIL—NORFOLK, VIRGINIA SECTION

he can beg, borrow or steal in a deal to bolster up a lost cause, abandoned by all sane folks, is no doubt lured by the goddess of chance to the point where his judgment is inert or lost entirely. Surely, it requires no extended argument to show that the chronic speculator, acting more on impulse than reason, is a dangerous man to follow and a real nuisance to the entire trade.

It is true that a good size volume could be written on the evils and the benefits of speculation in the different phases of the produce trade.

Too often speculation is diametrically opposed to legitimate business. Again, business often loses its charm and its profits if all speculation is barred out. But it may be put down as a fact that speculation usually looks for a reward without giving a value received in service. In other words, it is a device to obtain easy money. It seeks to take advantage of circumstances or conditions, and demands a fee for its mastery of a situation which it is supposed to have anticipated.

Contrasted with real business, speculation exhibits some phenomenal traits. Business is slow, plodding, aiming at an aggregate piled up from a series of small profits; speculation is lithe, agile, and is constantly trying for a bold stroke by which to make a big killing. Business aims at a touch down by masses on tackle and center rushes, while speculation seeks to make gains by long end runs and is fond of trying to kick goals from the forty-yard line. Speculation is akin to poetry, business is more like prose; the former is spring time, the latter is autumn. The one is the rainbow, the other the shower. And so they stalk hand in hand,—the twin brothers of destiny in all the affairs in the produce realm.

Perhaps all speculation is legitimate when the element of chance has been reduced to a minimum. But who can say when speculation ceases to be more than a doubt? No one can be absolutely sure until the time is up. What generally would be called a speculative deal may be in fact only an investment with an almost assured handsome profit within a reasonable time. There are occasions when celery, apples, butter or poultry are preferable as an investment to U. S. government bonds so far as profits are concerned.

Largely the wisdom or folly of speculation lies in being reasonably sure of the ground before you. To the extent that human judgment and foresight have their limitations, just to that extent has speculation its short comings. Speculation can never be perfect for it must always rest on more or less imperfect and doubtful data.

But some men are gifted with better reason and a more penetrating eye into conditions than others and they are, therefore, better speculators. But be it said to the credit of the wiser heads in the produce game,

they generally prefer to fight shy of speculating except as they are forced into it by the arbitrary standards, customs and seasons that must be met and reckoned with.

And so the secret of success in speculating in the produce market depends on intelligence. In other words, success is the premium put on correct information and expert knowledge. This appears to be in line with the general order of affairs throughout the universe, and there is no man or set of men who can cut intelligence out of its ultimate reward.

I shall not attempt to disprove that the man who gives up his time to the study of some particular commodity, and who accumulates valuable data and information relating to the production and distribution of certain kinds of produce, and who afterwards stakes his money on a risk should not be entitled to whatever remuneration he can get.

I am afraid there are some who make faces at speculators because of their superior wits. To make a long story short the successful speculator is thoroughly abreast of the times. It takes the best set of brains to make good at his game, and there must be no mental kinks in his plans and no corrosion allowed in his thinking machine.

The question has been asked again and again if speculators are not merely the camp followers of the great produce army. Some are so rash as to claim that speculators are barnacles instead of benefactors. It must be admitted that sometimes a speculator is gambling on money belonging to someone else. Many brokers throughout the country are fond of this very pastime. Orders are often booked for car lot shipments when the broker has no instructions to buy or sell. It easily can be seen the broker figures that prices will go higher or lower, and he can settle at a profit instead of taking his brokerage and handing over the purchase to his fictitious client, or vice versa.

But if the market should go up or down in the wrong way, or if his client, unaware that the broker has placed an order for him, lays in a stock of the same goods from some other source, if he has been in the market, and the broker fails to make good his delivery there is usually the devil to pay. It is needless to emphasize that this practice should be frowned down and bitterly opposed by the trade at large, for just such business has been responsible for losses of friendships and money galore. I have no purpose to make any insinuations against brokers as a whole, for I have already pointed out that a good broker is a blessing in many cases, and I deem it his function in the scheme of handling produce is a legitimate one so long as he confines himself to legitimate trading within legitimate lines. But above everything he should not be a speculator, and if he must speculate he should speculate on his own money and his own

reputation, and not presume to make a cat's-paw of other people, too often without their knowledge or consent.

In conclusion, I want to say that a very large percentage of the dangerous speculation connected with handling fruits and produce can be regulated within safe bounds and often entirely eliminated by the trade at large if proper steps are taken in time.

The man or the firm who knows the ground thoroughly and who works in the light of past experience is justified in taking risks that may be dangerous guess work for the inexperienced operator with a limited capital and trade. Exact knowledge is the best preventive of dangerous speculation.

In truth, speculation itself ceases to be speculative when the crucial test of common sense is rigidly applied and the element of chance is reduced to a minimum or eliminated so far as possible. Although there may be losses now and then to be charged against the seasoned speculator in produce lines which he knows from beginning to end, the sum total of his operations may be expected to overbalance by far the minor losses resulting from his taking advantages of promising opportunities now and then.

As folly leads to its own destruction, so does wild speculation work out its own ruin. Those who get the fever too strong and who fail to discover the error of their way in time will sooner or later be wiped off the map and sink into utter oblivion.

So long as speculation is mere guess work it is to be deprecated. When it is based on experience, or if a course of careful reasoning and observation has preceded the determination to buy, it may be only a good investment that will become a touchstone and turn things into gold.

## CHAPTER V

### INFORMATION

It is not amiss even at this early stage of our survey of the produce business to devote a chapter to the right important subject of information. But I hope I may be pardoned on account of the possible charge of posing as an oracle that knows all even about the kinds of information necessary for the peaceful and profitable conduct of the business we are considering, though I have spent several years of study on some phases of this subject, and I think my observations have not been wholly in vain.

The old lady who is credited by tradition with the always ready remark that "If our foresights were only as good as our hind sights folks would be saved lots of trouble" no doubt expressed more philosophy than can be readily understood. Her criticism of the shortcoming of human wisdom is especially applicable to produce affairs.

In this line of commercial endeavor we have under investigation a premium is always put on the judgment that can penetrate the future and know when it is best to buy or sell, when best to grow, ship or store, or even to give away an article, for there are "white elephants" in the produce business. Whoever can foresee what is best to do in a majority of cases is perhaps a direct descendant of Solomon.

To know what to do and how to do it is, therefore, a prime requisite to the successful operation of any phase of the business. It takes some severe jolts to teach some people simple lessons, and now and then you will find a man who has grown gray-headed in the business who has been tripping and falling over the same old stumbling block every time he comes across it. Such people wonder why they never seem to get ahead, yet they fail to take the pains to look, to think. They are sadly in need of reliable information in a majority of cases, I believe.

Again, there are a few men, only a few, in the business who possess a genius for doing the right thing at the right time, and many people are pleased to call them lucky because of their frequent and sometimes brilliant coups. Usually they are men who weigh carefully and assimilate all available information.

Things rarely happen; they usually shape themselves after a plan. It is the man with a plan that turns the world upside down before breakfast. By this I mean the man who does things, or in curbstone vernacular who "gets there." Such men may be quick to decide and generally apt in deciding right, yet you overestimate when you credit them with a mental equipment too far above the ordinary. The men who have made most startling successes in produce affairs are usually only ordinary mortals, but most of them have very extraordinary methods for thought and action. It often happens that an important deal involving considerable money and profits can be transacted in a few minutes by an employe, but which required an hour or two or perhaps a day or two for the boss to plan and get in shape for closing, and so mapped out that it had to go right.

I cannot emphasize too much the importance of careful thinking out of every detail whenever possible, although details must give way to general plans. If it is possible, information both general and detailed, should be procured and studied by dealers, shippers and everybody in the trade. An intelligent selection is necessary, of course, in most cases for different lines, but it is safe to say that no piece of real information of importance is not worth while to well nigh everyone in the trade. The grower of early potatoes in the southwest should keep well informed as to the visible supply of old potatoes in the northern territory for late use when the new crop will come on the market. Forsooth, he should know approximately before he even plants his early crop. The lemon grower in California should be abreast of conditions in the rest of the lemon growing sections of the world, and he should know just as nearly as possible what the next Sicily crop will be. The illustration might be continued indefinitely, but I am sure everyone will easily see the point I am driving at, namely, know all about your line you can.

No one individual or even an organization of individuals that has ever been formed so far can dig out and classify a line of information relative to any particular commodity that will be an absolutely certain guide on which to do business. But there is no doubt that carefully collected and correctly classified information is the nearest to an infallible guide so far as a guide can be constructed for the direction of this business into which so many variable factors enter, and in which so many aggravating circumstances constantly arise. But the mariner's compass can hardly be blamed for a shipwreck due to a sudden storm, as the compass is only designed to point north and south, and it may have done its own work admirably but at the same time furnished poor marine insurance.

Information, in its varied forms, comes of course either in printed or



verbal reports, or from such evidences as the observer may be able to scan in his own horizon with his own eye. But we shall see later on that the average observer who depends upon his own limited range of vision is no better off so far as correct information is concerned than if he were blind. Local conditions in any given section may be worthless, considered alone, so far as the general situation over the country is concerned. However, conditions in one locality may have a considerable bearing on conditions throughout the country, provided they are taken collectively and viewed intelligently.

Let me illustrate: For some reason the pear crop in Blank county, New York, may be short fifty per cent compared with the normal crop. Without taking into consideration the yield out of about all other important pear bearing districts it would be unwise to conclude that the pear crop all over the country is short because it is short in Blank county. Every day the trade is realizing more and more that the country must be viewed as a whole, and it is with the aim of getting a broad view of conditions that we are mostly concerned when we consider, at least a majority of commodities embraced in produce lines.

If I knew an absolutely sure method of obtaining accurate information that could be relied upon implicitly I would hardly be disposed to print it in this book in exchange for a small sum when I could have the system patented and sell it to different people for thousands of dollars.

There is no hard and fast set of rules that can be applied indiscriminately to all lines and which will secure the desired results in obtaining information. The reports on different crops and produce commodities issued from time to time by the general government, and also by the various state governments, are supposed to be collected from reliable sources and to be intelligently classified, yet there is hardly a reasonable doubt that many of these documents and reports are often more worthless for business purposes than the blank paper on which they are printed. Not only do they often possess no value in throwing light on exact conditions, but they frequently have an evil influence in creating wrong sentiments and adversely affecting the markets. In this connection I think it only worth while to cite the manner in which figures published annually relating to cotton have been juggled with for years by crooked statisticians for the benefit of even more crooked gamblers throughout the country who had been playing try-ball with this staple commodity from time immemorial. The same erroneous dope has also been issued, either by accident or design, relating to other crops of the country as subsequent conditions have shown in some cases. But I cannot forbear to mention in this connection that there is apparently a noticeable improve-

ment in most of these government bulletins, and it is to be hoped that a general housecleaning and brushing up will take place eventually which will rid the different departments not only of their employees and attaches who on occasions have given such poor service, but also of every phase of suspicion or carelessness in making up these documents. A report relative to growing crops or the visible supply of any produce commodity in the country which is undertaken by the general or any state government should be a model of accuracy, completeness and neatness and this high standard should be maintained at all hazards. Of course, the general purpose of the government reports, both state and national, cannot be questioned, for they are intended to be of value to the public.

Aside from being accurate, information must be complete if it is worth while, and for these reasons it is plain to see that it costs money. Skilled talent must direct its collection and compilation, and owing to the wide latitude that must be covered in anything like a general report, it is easy enough to see that the undertaking is no small task when a commodity is grown or produced over a considerable area in different sections.

Another thing which is essential for information is that it shall be recent and down-to-date if it is to be taken into account as a market influence. Statistical reports for a decade may be valuable for comparative purposes but well nigh worthless so far as the coming crop about which they relate may be concerned. For this very reason I am led to believe that a great deal of money spent by our federal government has been wasted in publishing dignified, gigantic volumes that are out of date for all practical purposes sometimes before they are off the press. But I presume the libraries over the country have to be filled with something, and for this and other causes the less said about them the better, and maybe I should drop this feature of the subject here.

The various newspapers and publications devoted to different lines of the trade are valuable assets in keeping abreast of what is going on, but it is necessary that even these papers be scrutinized carefully and watched all the time, for it occasionally happens some of the most asinine dope imaginable is served through their columns. A few of the papers specialize, however, and as a general thing they are nearer the truth than such papers as are concerned with produce matters only as a secondary issue. Too often these newspaper reports are taken at second hand or even third hand.

Individual firms or associations should make it a special point to have a system of their own, designed for their special requirements, and to cover such territory as may be necessary in procuring the vital data so necessary for their purposes.

An inquiry blank containing a half dozen or more questions covering a certain commodity can be run off on a mimeograph or otherwise printed in short order, and can be mailed with a two cent stamp to different people with a request that they answer the questions relative to conditions about a given crop or market in their locality.

It is usually best to enclose a stamped envelope for reply, and in this way the cost of each report does not amount to more than a few cents. By using this system a wide territory can be covered at a nominal cost, and as a general thing the writer finds this an excellent system for obtaining prompt information and the kind which is usually most dependable. It is surprising how swiftly these reports can be handled when promptness is requested of the addressee. It hardly requires a week to hear from all sections of the country. Of course, where special swift-ness is desired it is best to use the telegraph or the telephone. Although the cost comes higher, still it is frequently a good investment to spend twenty-five dollars to be correctly informed for one day's business.

But it is necessary if information is to be valuable it must be correct, and correctness is not always possible if collected in too great a rush. However, most crop reports are only estimates and are only designed to be approximately accurate. For all practical purposes these estimates, if secured from reliable sources, are as good as exact figures to afford a basis for trading. If a complete series of reports are secured, for example, from a considerable number of reliable potato growers and shippers in the leading potato growing sections, and these reports show conclusively that the acreage has been increased compared with last year, also that favorable weather has prevailed for potato growing and that no damage more than the average has resulted from bugs, blight or rot, then it is fairly safe to expect a good yield of potatoes. But the yield of a given crop is not an absolutely sure index as to what that crop will sell for, as there are many factors that enter into making prices besides the yield, which we have already observed and will see more clearly later on.

To get correct information it is essential that it come from reliable sources. Many growers and shippers are absolutely unable to give an accurate idea of a crop or a commodity in which they may be interested. The reason for this is not far to seek, as it is only human nature to be biased by one's interests. But it is becoming more and more evident that it is bad policy to try to mislead the trade about what a crop yield will be, or how much of a given produce commodity may be available, as these distorted reports sooner or later act as a kind of boomerang that comes back and makes trouble.

For instance, it is bad business for the growers themselves to scatter

broadcast a report that the apple crop is short if such is not really the case, for when the time comes for putting this crop on the market the truth is found out; buyers become nervous and refuse to pay prices asked by the growers for fear the real truth about the visible supply of apples has not been discovered, and that they will be buying trouble as well as apples by paying prices asked.

As a general thing, however, it does not take long for the real truth about fruits and vegetables and other produce to be found out, or for the trained people in the trade to learn what is doing in a score of markets and in a hundred growing sections. No line of business is more intimately related than the produce trade, although the complexities of the business and the petty jealousies that have sprung up among some, often conspire to defeat the good ends that might be attained in the trade if sensible co-operation were more universal than now is the case.

We have observed in another chapter the importance of the trade keeping abreast of the times, and the pleasure that attends systematic study, but I want to note here the great value accruing from thorough study and from being well informed. For the small outlay involved in obtaining suitable literature these days information is within the reach of all. And it does not take more time than can be afforded to read up on conditions. Then a reasonable amount of correspondence among growers, associations or dealers may be undertaken if an exchange of views is desired.

To that class of the trade engaged in buying and selling fruits and produce it will hardly seem worth while to offer any suggestions in reference to the necessity of being informed, and I should refrain from taking up any time with the dealers were it not that I have seen so many cases where the absence of important correct information has caused losses of money as well as losses of friendships, and where opportunities to make money have not been taken advantage of by a firm or individual that lacked the information, but which was seized upon and made to yield profits and pleasure to others who had been wide enough awake to get the information necessary to the proper and prompt handling of trades that fell their way.

Information is the very bed rock on which business must be transacted, and it is equally necessary for the legitimate dealer and for the successful speculator. Indeed, it is doubtful if the speculator really speculates if he has not the correct information on which to base his judgment as to when to buy and when to sell, and what difference, if any, exists between price and value as applied to a given commodity.

A great many people who are well informed cannot give an offhand

idea about how they obtained their information, for in many cases information has to be absorbed from a hundred different sources and assimilated through a hundred different processes. Of course, this figure of speech will not be construed literally, but what I am driving at is to establish the fact that information cannot be pulled out as a cork is from a bottle with a cork screw, nor can it be swept up with a broom, nor can it be bought oftentimes for pure gold.

Information comes on every current during the day and it often dies at sunset; it is sometimes old before the dew has dried on it in the morning; sometimes it happens to be disguised by an outer coating and woe unto the heavy operator who gets a wrong tip or who fails to interpret a piece of gospel dope.

The firm or individual who attempts to buy and sell, and who is not correctly informed will meet troubles of various kinds which might be avoided if some energy were put into collecting and assimilating the right kind of information. To succeed in any branch of the produce business it means that one must have and keep down-to-date and up-to-date information.

It is true that some judgment and skill must be employed to select just what information is essential and what is not. All information relating to the business is good for those engaged in the business, although all of it may not be absolutely necessary. The man who raises poultry exclusively may have failed to see where he might become vitally interested in legislation effecting cold storages, and as a general proposition there could hardly be expected to be more than a common sympathy between those interested in the raising of poultry and people engaged in conducting a storage business. But it recently became necessary that the cold storages, whose business was jeopardized by the proposing of unwise and dangerous legislation, to appeal to the commercial poultry raiser, who is also in the trade, for his influence in defeating such legislation as threatened seriously to affect if not actually ruin the business of one or both. This applies to case after case involving different business interests in the trade and which every well informed man knows to be true.

New conditions are constantly arising and new problems are presenting themselves before the trade for solution; new opportunities are opening constantly, new fortunes, new enterprises, new people and hundreds of other things are coming up all the time, and sometimes the very thing you want to know about and should know about escapes your attention through your own fault in not trying to find out about it.

Obviously the moral of this chapter is to get all the information you can and use it the best you know how.

## CHAPTER VI

### TRANSPORTATION

Owing to the fact that fruits and produce are generally shipped some considerable distance from the localities where they are grown or produced to the places where they are handled and consumed in the larger market centers, and owing to the perishable nature of such articles it is quite evident that the item of transportation is one highly important as it relates to and affects the various branches of the trade.

In the limited space at my disposal in this volume I can only hope to refer briefly to some of the important phases of transportation matters which I consider to be of vital interest to growers, shippers and dealers everywhere. And in this connection I may say that some remarks which may be made while treating on this subject might be construed as being of entirely too radical a character. But at the same time I want it clearly understood that whatever I may say on this subject springs from genuine convictions which have come from observing the general methods of transportation in this country, and also the very serious and damaging effects to the general public from what I conceive to be gross transportation abuses. At the same time I trust that those who read this volume may be fair enough to give me credit for suggesting only such remedies as appear to me to be rational and expedient.

Taking the matter of transportation by and large, it no doubt possesses many commendable features, but withal some faults which must be considered seriously, however we may look at the subject. No doubt, as time goes on we shall get nearer the millennium, and there will be many improvements in all branches of transportation which will make the present system look more like child's play than it now does to a candid observer who may be given credit for investigating such matters carefully and impartially, and not forming conclusions too quickly.

At the outset I want to be fair enough to say that I really feel the shipping public has invited a number of the transportation abuses with

which we are cursed, and with which we are contending in a greater or lesser degree. For example, the car shortages and consequent congestion of traffic frequently resulting therefrom have been induced in a large measure by consignees in various markets who too frequently make it a practice to leave loaded cars on track at destination an undue length of time, preferring to pay demurrage charges instead of providing the necessary warehouse facilities to take care of shipments. Yet this practice alone cannot be charged with being the sole cause of the car shortages that develop from time to time.

Now and then complaint is heard among the railroad men that cars of potatoes, etc., are left on track at destination as long as 30 days, and there are lots of cases where other kinds of produce are kept for an undue period in cars which should be used for moving other traffic. Some of the more intelligent traffic men in the produce trade say that it would be a blessing if car service rules were revised, and instead of charging a demurrage of \$1 a day if cars are not unloaded within 48 hours after arrival at destination, that the fee should be made \$10 a day for every day longer than the first 48 hours. While this rule would seem to be rather extreme, there can be no doubt that it would facilitate the movement of traffic wonderfully and would do away largely with a certain element in the trade in the larger markets who have no place of business but "down on the tracks," and whose business,—assets, bank accounts and all,—is carried under their hats.

But on the other hand, I believe the railroads should be made to stand losses incurred by failure to provide suitable equipment to move traffic when it is offered and is ready to move, whatever car service rules might be in effect. I am sure there are wholesome arguments in favor of the so called reciprocal demurrage, and it is a pity that some such system could not have been put into effect long ago.

The subject of claims against transportation companies affords ample material for a good size volume. The money tied up in claims for overcharges in freight bills and in loss in damage claims which belongs to the produce trade in the United States would be equivalent to all the money in some of our largest banks.

Thousands of these claims are perfectly legitimate and can hardly be disputed, but the claim departments apparently must have something to toy with and to use their form letters on so as to keep the rust off their typewriters. The way in which the average claim department operates would certainly justify the supposition that it is designed rather to prevent than to facilitate the adjustment of claims.

The cardinal sin that most claim officials' will have to answer for, I be-

lieve, is that of their nerve-racking slowness. If someone could inject a good dose of "make haste" into the average claim department it would relieve the shipping public of lots of profanity, induced from suspense day after day, and sometimes year after year before action is obtained and final report is made on certain important claims. In urging the payment of railroad claims promptly after reasonable investigation does not necessarily imply that the railroads would give up more money than they are now paying for claims, but they would not have the indefinite use of money that does not belong to them.

Some provision should be made in our laws regulating transportation, whereby a common carrier should be given a stated time to investigate a claim and report on it definitely, and if they fail to comply, judgment should thereupon issue against the common carrier and the claimant be allowed to realize on same forthwith. This would be only a reversal of the present system which is practiced by the common carriers themselves.

Because there seems to be a lack of care shown among dealers especially in smaller markets in the matter of handling claims I feel that a few suggestions from some practical traffic men may not come amiss.

In order to get a claim paid it should be properly made out and filed in the right way. No doubt lots of time and money would be saved if a few details were observed.

In presenting overcharge claims, for example, it is frequently the case that no reference whatever is given to any tariff as authority for the rate claimed, and in some cases no reason whatever is given for the claim, except that the party making it thinks that the rate charged is too high. Such claims are not entitled to serious consideration, of course.

In the case of loss or damage claims sufficient care is not exercised in many cases to have proper exceptions taken at the time of delivery of a shipment and when claim is presented, investigation shows that clear receipt was given, and, of course, claims then must be declined until proof of liability is shown, which frequently causes an undue loss of time.

The fact that the rules of the railroad companies require a receipt to be signed before the property is seen does not at all prevent the proper exceptions being taken when a shipment is found to be short or damaged. In such cases draymen should insist upon the shortage or bad order notation being made upon his receipt before taking the property out of the possession of the railroad company. Should agents refuse to allow such notation then the facts should at once be reported to the consignee, who should notify the agent, in writing (not by telephone) of the particulars of damage, and that shipment is on hand for his inspection.

Quite a good deal of the delay in settlement of damage claims will be



obviated by having a good clear record made at the time damaged goods are received, and the facts clearly set forth in claim when presented. Generally freight claim agents stand ready to co-operate in having proper record made in all cases of damage at the time delivery is made.

It is the best plan for those shipping and receiving produce of all kinds to keep a permanent record of all data relative to shipments going out or coming in.

For all dealers or receivers the following information should be kept, especially in handling car lots: The exact date and time car reported arrived by the railroad; where, date and time of day car inspected; temperature inside and outside of car; amount of ice in bunkers, "plugs" in or out, or how ventilated; appearance and condition of commodity; date and on whom connected with railroad or express company was notice of claim served; date and whom of the railroad or express company was requested to examine; where and when, and by whom examined for railroad or express company.

Claims for overcharge in rate, classification or weight should be supported by:

First—Original paid freight bill. But when original paid freight bill cannot be produced, claimant should indemnify carrier against loss for payment of claim supported by original document.

Second—Original invoice or certified copy of same where claim is based on wrong classification.

Third—Sworn certificate of weight when claim is based upon an overcharge in weight.

Fourth—Original bill of lading, if not previously surrendered to the carrier or certified copy of same. But the original bill of lading is not an essential part of an overcharge claim and its absence should not in any way invalidate claim.

Fifth—When claim is for overcharge in rate, tariff reference should be given for rate or classification claimed whenever it can be obtained by claimant, as this greatly simplifies adjustment.

Sixth—Statement showing how overcharge is determined.

Claims for loss and damage should be supported by the following documents:

First—Original bill of lading if same has not been surrendered to carrier.

Second—The original paid freight bill.

Third—Original invoice or properly certified copy of same.

Fourth—Formal bill from claimant setting forth in detail amount of loss or damage and how same is arrived at.

Fifth—Where original bill of lading or original paid freight bill cannot be produced, claimant should indemnify carrier against loss for payment of claim supported by original document.

In handling claims for concealed loss and damage it is desirable to furnish in addition to the foregoing—

First—Affidavit from the shipper that property as called for by the invoice was properly and carefully packed and in condition to withstand all ordinary risks of transportation, and was delivered to the railroad in good condition.

Second—Affidavit from drayman at destination setting forth that the package or packages were handled with proper care from the railroad station to consignee's store or warehouse and met with no accident which could cause loss or damage, and

Third—Affidavit from party who unpacked the shipments, setting forth the exact condition of same when unpacked.

In all cases where there is a shortage or damage it is a good plan to observe the following:

(a) Shortages discovered at time of delivery should be endorsed on the paid freight bill.

(b) Damages discovered at time of delivery should be endorsed upon the paid freight bill, such notation to state the exact extent and nature of damage.

Some people in the trade declare they find it a good plan in filing claims to advise the railroad or express company against whom claim is made that if the claim is not given attention and reported on within 60 or 90 days it will be placed in the hands of an attorney with instructions to bring suit.

And while this policy may seem a bit strenuous it is no doubt justified from the experience some people have had, and in the matter of overcharges it would probably be as well to put the limit at 30 days or less.

There can be no doubt that too much of the trade's money is tied up in claims, and that too much time is wasted in collecting money that ought to be paid promptly.

Minimum carload weights are a source of much distress in handling certain commodities. No general rule can be set down for the regulation of this proposition, but everyone knows that there is a safe limit for the loading of perishables, and when this limit is exceeded losses are certain from heating and crowding. Shippers who are too economical, and want to effect a saving in freight by overloading, invite trouble on this score. The limit should be set at a reasonable figure and rigidly observed. But it never should be unreasonable. Those who are not versed in moving

perishables should always get the advice of an experienced person who knows how many packages or how much weight can be safely loaded into a car for different distances under different temperatures, and should be governed accordingly.

It would be an excellent plan if a uniform system were devised to allow destination weights to govern in assessing freight charges, at least, on a majority of perishable commodities in the fruit and produce catalog. The shrinkage in the weight of a car of vegetables is usually a considerable item, and where goods are being sold by weight it is a great hardship to require the receiver to stand all the loss. To be nearer exact, the difference between the actual weight at initial point and actual destination weight might justly be divided by two, and freight charges collected on half the loss of shrinkage in transit. But if there is loss from shrinkage through delay or improper handling, of course, the better plan is to make claim for loss or damage. Many people in the trade have had no end of trouble on this matter of shrinkage in transit. The present system of handling these items is far from being right.

Nowadays it is absolutely essential that every produce dealer make as thorough study as possible of transportation, and if his business is sufficiently large, that he employ a trained traffic manager. The fact that railroads and other transportation lines are not now bound to protect any rate except that in their published tariff, and that whoever makes a slip on a lower rate, although in error, on the presumption that he has authority for the lower charge than the published rate, puts himself in a bad way, and there have been not a few of the larger operators in the produce business during the last few years that have been forced to burn quite a little gray matter and not a small amount of money in settling for freight charges that they thought had been paid and forgotten.

Reverting to the subject of car shortages and the inabilities of transportation lines to move traffic given them, I want to say that there are some instances where numerous dealers and shipping organizations have been forced to take losses which assume proportions that ought to make a man think and think hard what the railroads were built for.

It is, indeed, a serious matter where produce people have shipments that ought to be moved, and who may be getting telegrams, telephone messages and letters every hour placing orders for immediate or prompt shipment, and whose salvation may depend upon reasonably quick action, and who are in many cases left stranded high and dry, to see their prospective profits dwindle and disappear because the goods they have to offer and which are valuable, are deteriorating for being held, and because the markets of the country will not wait on the slow service or no service of the railroads.

I submit they have a complaint to make against the transportation interests which should be thundered from the housetops and emblazoned upon the sky. I am opposed to yielding to any such puerile arguments from the railroads as, "We are doing the best we can to take care of the traffic," or "the business is growing so fast we are unable to keep up with it."

Such disgusting stuff as this only stimulates a feeling becoming more and more wide-spread in this country that if the railroads themselves, to whom the public has made many concessions, cannot or will not handle properly the business they are supposed to conduct, then in the interest of the public someone else should undertake to see that the business is properly conducted.

I think everybody of ordinary intelligence must agree that it is entirely feasible and highly necessary that the transportation corporations be forced to do their duty to the country which has done so much for them in the past. It is really amusing to hear some of the higher railroad officials talking now and then about how much the country owes the railroads for their great work in the country's development. If ever the cart was put before the horse here is the original example.

Surely the man is crazy who sincerely believes that the transportation lines of this country are conducted from an eleemosynary standpoint. I think the firm conviction is widespread that when the transportation magnates give away one dollar they expect two or more in return. They have apparently operated on a narrow, selfish and penurious plan so far as their general attitude towards the public at large is concerned. Haunted by the constant fear of increased operating expenses and drained of their revenues because of the infernal watered stock representing fictitious values and securities, robbing net earnings to pay dividends upon them, the transportation people have been slow to provide even such equipment as is necessary and essential to protect human life among their own employes or among the passengers they haul for a price.

And while I have got the thought in mind I want to say that it has become far too common to see a big headline in the papers telling about numbers of people being killed in railroad wrecks, and which notices apparently cause little more than passing attention. Why? Is it because the American people have become so stolid as to be unmoved when their fellows are being murdered in this fashion? Will they submit tamely to being robbed and then maimed, sons of men who revolted from the tyranny of George the Third, who carved an empire out of a wilderness and who have wrought the greatest civilization yet recorded in the annals of history? Will they submit to such treatment, I ask, without a protest that will become a revolution itself if necessary to provide a remedy?

I am talking soberly, and I want it plainly understood that I do not pose as an erratic reformer. But I desire to emphasize more strongly than I can convey by language the fact that I regard the men who are responsible for some of the disgraceful conditions in transportation affairs of this country as being more despicable than the poor unfortunate who hurls bombs for revenge, and who tries to wreak vengeance on crowned heads. I think no argument is necessary to show that the former is in a large measure responsible for the latter.

Human life and property are valued too lightly by the carriers anyway; if I have any influence whatever in this volume I trust I may in some small measure help to create a sentiment that will overcome this regrettable condition in our country. Perhaps after all is said and done the railroads and other transportation lines are as good as we want them to be. Let us hope that the time will soon come when the pressure of public sentiment will demand improvements which will give us more for our money, and enable us to travel and ship in greater safety and more expeditiously than at the present time.

There is one satisfaction in all of the agitation we have had the past few years regarding transportation reforms and that is some reform has been accomplished, and it should be remembered that reforms never work backward. We should make no mistake in looking forward to further improvements, and I hazard my reputation as a prophet on the statement that the next generation will insist on some big improvements over what we have tolerated in the past.

As a working basis for future improvement I incline to the opinion that it will be highly desirable to provide such means as will best impress upon the transportation interests that they owe a service to the country, and that the service reasonably due must be properly discharged for a fair remuneration, and I would strongly object to allowing the transportation interests to determine solely what this fair remuneration is to be. At the same time, I want it clearly understood that I am not one of those who would ask or expect the railroads or express companies to work at a loss. In other words, I believe that their rates should be equitably arranged so that the proceeds arising from their operations should pay a reasonable return on the capital invested in the different properties, and to allow for the depreciation in those properties.

The questions of claims, demurrage, minimum weights, refrigeration and even the question of speedy transportation itself, are all subsidiary to the one question of rates.

I confess that I hold no brief which will entitle me to pose as an expert on the subject of rates, but at the same time I regard it as

being impossible for any essential regulation of railroad rates until the federal government has put a valuation on the railroad properties themselves, and by this means establish what should be considered a fair return on the railroad securities, what legitimate operating expenses should be, and what should be allowed for depreciation of the properties.

Then and not until then will it be possible to take any definite, intelligent action on the question of rates which have been figured heretofore mostly on a basis of what the traffic will bear, and in many cases I regret to say, more than the traffic of the produce trade will bear if the business is to be profitably continued.

I think it cannot be successfully denied that the system of rate making in the past has been very arbitrary, and in many cases unreasonable and unjust to the public at large; if I may be permitted to say it, there are some instances which would lead one to suppose that the produce trade has fared much worse than some other similar lines of business when the matter of rates was being handled.

The theory that rates should be put as high as the traffic will stand may have been the correct view during the days of Huntington, but such highway robbery will not square with modern views of service. Whether the common carriers will agree or not it remains true that they are under some obligations to the people who place traffic in their hands and make possible their operation. These obligations should imply something more than a license to rob and steal enough from the public to pay several times over the actual cost of traffic, to allow for proper maintenance and operation and also to provide for the necessary depreciation in property.

To say the least, rate making heretofore has been a one-sided proposition. The transportation lines simply made a safe guess at what the rates should be, always figuring in every contingency against losses to themselves in the way of claims, for overcharge or loss and damage; the public has simply paid the bills.

There are scattering instances where competition has had a wholesome effect in fixing tariffs, but these cases are rare in comparison with the sum total of the thousands and thousands of arbitrary rates that are like the sands of the sea.

What say the moguls higher up? "We must protect the widows and orphans who have invested their savings in transportation securities."

• Invested in what? Perhaps one part bona fide security and three or four parts bona fide water.

Where did this water come from?

Who authorized it?

Is it legitimate?

Granting for the sake of argument that the widows and orphans have invested in securities that are not securities, it seems to me strange logic to argue that the great public at large should be called upon to contribute a vast sum annually which in the aggregate staggers the imagination, to make good the errors of judgment in these widows and orphans who have been so unsophisticated as to be lured into the sheep fold to be sheared like so many lambs, which they would really be in that case, because the stock jobbers are not so afflicted with the blessed fever to take care of the widows and orphans as to hand over to them any water to quench their thirst, and especially the water that might fall out of their "blue sky."

Very true, the water in railway securities does not add anything to the earning power of the actual property it is supposed to represent, but the use of water in stock-jobbing was long ago discovered to be as necessary for these purposes as in the every day affairs of life. Of course, the plea about widows and orphans has been exploded long ago, and I only refer to it here in lighter vein.

Where water does positive and lasting injury to the growth and development of the country and to the produce trade is in the matter of fixing rates. There are no authentic figures to offset the claims of the transportation people as to the actual physical valuation of their property, and since some valuation must be had as a basis on which to figure rates we find we are confronted with the real difficulty when we come to talk intelligently on the subject, especially when it is necessary to controvert statements which are given out by financiers and owners of railway properties.

The Spokane rate case heard by the Interstate Commerce Commission a few years ago is a clear case in point. It will be recalled that at the Chicago hearing where the Spokane rate case was first brought up the Great Northern Railway company, owned by James J. Hill and others, submitted a physical valuation of its properties as one of its main arguments why the then existing system of rates should not be disturbed.

It was argued at length by the railroad attorneys that the road was under-capitalized, and that its present system of rates was only sufficient to make a fair showing on the capital invested in the property. The logical inference is that if this road should have occasion to meet a sudden emergency it would be necessary to raise instead of lower its rates.

And who could say them nay?

In a similar inquiry into rates of the Northern Pacific there was a similar line of argument, and the submitting of a similar physical valuation of property. It was noteworthy that in neither case was there a



LOADING EXPRESS SHIPMENTS OF FLORIDA VEGETABLES FOR NORTHERN MARKETS





SHIPPING CAR LOTS OF STRAWBERRIES AT DICKINSON, TEXAS

searching cross-examination aimed at either set of valuations, and the testimony submitted by the railroads stands so far absolutely unrefuted.

After the hearing of the cases referred to a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission is said to have asked an attorney representing the people why he did not cross-examine the railroad witnesses on the valuation of the road submitted during the hearing.

"For the reason that it would take \$100,000 and more than a year's work for me to make such a valuation of the properties on my own authority which would be even a basis for an intelligent cross-examination," he replied.

Right here is the real trouble. We are bound to rely upon the railroads and other common carriers, as the matter now stands, to tell us what they must yield in revenue to sustain themselves and to earn a fair revenue for their stockholders. It is easy to see that a federal valuation of railway properties, and the properties of common carriers generally, is absolutely essential to even a fair start at equitable rate making.

So far the Interstate Commerce Commission is credited with only a few theoretical principles about rate making, and when they are submerged with figures supposed to be the result of calculations by experts purporting to cover a great railway system, the commission is powerless to deny or refute their correctness, as there is little or nothing of an authentic nature to offer in lieu of the figures submitted by the railroads themselves, and which can surely be relied upon as being high enough and too high. Here is where watered stock serves as a blind that works a serious hardship on the general public.

Just how far there should be or will be federal intervention in rate making in the future, or how far there should or may be federal intervention even in the operation or the ownership of common carriers, time alone can tell.

But if intervention should come who would be directly responsible for it but the railroads themselves? It cannot be denied that the aggravated features that have arisen in the past and are still arising from time to time and the apparent arbitrary and defiant attitude of some transportation magnates to the rights of the public in the matter of transportation and its cost, is, indeed, a cause for grave alarm.

I have paid close attention to expressions from different people in the trade from various sections of the country, and I am sure the prevailing and overwhelming sentiment is to play fair with all transportation lines, but there is a rigid determination to make the transportation lines toe the mark themselves.

Nobody will be so unreasonable as to insist upon or even to request

the railroads or other common carriers to do business at a loss by making rates too low. But at the same time, a majority of the business people of these United States revolt at the idea of being forced to cough up on shipment after shipment, to pay for something they are not getting, and in settling a charge they have no voice or influence in making as has been the case entirely with transportation charges, at least up until a few years ago, and still is to a greater or lesser extent.

It is nice to talk about the people having the privilege of not paying rates by withholding shipments if they like, but the folly of such argument is too evident to require comment in this connection. The public must use the transportation lines; therefore, the rates for service furnished must be made reasonable, and the less arbitrary, "public-bdamned" arguments given out by the plutocrats and moguls higher up the better for all concerned, for sometime there may be a day of reckoning forced upon us, and it may be when the people are in a bad humor and they may have forgotten the American spirit which prefers to be governed by reason when possible, but who may become enraged when they see and know their rights are being trampled upon and to realize they have no redress but by physical force.

Let us hope that proper remedies will be found for existing evils in transportation matters before such an unfortunate state of affairs shall be reached in this country.

And it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the public "pays the freight" and is entitled by every rule of justice to have a voice in the fixing of charges imposed by the transportation lines for services rendered. Of course, it is the consumer who ultimately suffers from exorbitant freight rates and other excessive charges made for transportation and its necessary adjuncts. But the grower, the shipper, the producer and the distributor is bound to feel the effects of exorbitant or ill-adjusted freight rates in the conduct of their business.

A section of country may be embarrassed, an industry may be crippled, a market may be ruined, a firm or individual may be put out of business, by the juggling of rates and by other manipulation of transportation charges upon which the whole scheme of business nowadays must rest. Beyond doubt, the rates charged by common carriers are, as a general proposition, too high so far as produce commodities are concerned, and were it only necessary to pay dividends on a capitalization representing more nearly the actual value of the railway properties, and were a more economical system adopted for the administration of transportation matters generally, the rates could be reduced below the present level and still show a nice legitimate profit to the owners of railway securities based upon the actual valuation of physical assets.

Does it require the application of higher mathematics to prove that the money which is going to pay dividends on watered and fictitious securities is no more or less than stolen from the general public?

I am fully aware that we are dealing with generalities in this connection so far as the actual rates themselves are concerned, but I believe everyone connected indirectly or directly with the produce business will bear me out in saying that watered stocks and fictitious securities constitute a real menace to the produce trade indirectly and to the general public directly. Fictitious securities mean high cost for transportation.

An excessive rate covering a given commodity is a sure means of stifling the demand among consumers for that commodity whatever it may be. To charge 75c per hundred for poultry, butter and eggs between Chicago and New York, and at the same time allow dressed beef to move at about half this rate, is clearly a discrimination in favor of the latter commodity and results in a positive disadvantage to the former, which surely works to the financial loss of those handling dairy products both in the East and in the West. Here is an instance where the traffic is not so dissimilar in the essentials as to cause the wide difference in the existing rates. Many other cases might be cited to show that the produce trade, because of the lack of sympathy and co-operation among its various interests, has frequently got the worst of it when the matter of rate making was being attended to.

Again it is clearly a check on the fruit industry to assess outrageous refrigeration charges. It will be recalled that there was a round of vehement protests a few years ago at the system of highway robbery then in vogue by the private car lines which amounted to making advance charges several times over the actual cost of the ice used, and what the actual service amounted to plus a reasonable profit. Some relief has been obtained on this score, however, but there is more room for common sense reform in the matter of refrigeration.

I feel justified in urging that this phase of the transportation subject be not overlooked and that the trade continue its efforts for better refrigeration at more reasonable cost.

In a number of jobbing markets serious efforts should be made to secure proper refrigeration for less than carlot shipments from the jobbing points to the smaller towns, and also to insist upon having schedules as often as the traffic requires.

It is also worth while that the trade see to it that such measures as are necessary be put into effect to require the railroads to show just what amount of ice has been used when an expense bill is rendered for icing with freight or express charges. This is especially desirable when

there is no fixed charge for refrigeration from initial point to destination, and in all cases the information is worth obtaining and preserving for the handling of claims and for other purposes.

Certainly one of the most acute, wide-spread and insidious evils in the transportation field as relates to the produce trade has been with the express companies. Little appreciated and less understood, this has been a graft,—a plain hold-up in many cases—that has no equal in the annals of traffic in this country. The invasion of the produce field by the express people through their order and commission departments is one of the unwritten chapters of the old days when a charter for a transportation agency was looked upon, at least by some, as a license to steal.

The scheme of having an express agent in one town buy or sell fruits and produce for another in another town, allowing a divy among the agents and giving the company a haul, was one of the most complete plans to cripple and eventually ruin the legitimate produce jobbing business that the mind of man has yet devised.

Of all the transportation evils none has been more flagrant than the treatment of the fruit and produce trade at the hands of the express companies. Shipments of early fruits and vegetables from Southern points to Northern markets have been handled scandalously in a number of instances season after season, and at the same time upon a series of rates that almost make one weep to look at them. What is worse, these shipments have been tossed around by some of the express people about like so much junk. It appears, however, that a few of the express officials have had a kind of awakening of conscience, and I sincerely hope a change of heart.

But the express people can render even better service than they are now giving both as to the running time and the transfers, and also in the matter of delivery and the manner in which their employes take care of shipments. Some of them have yet to learn that perishable fruits and produce need extra care, and when extra rates, often outrageously high, are being paid for their carriage I believe the trade is justified in demanding and insisting upon proper treatment so far as service is concerned.

Whether a plan will ever be devised to drive the express companies out of the produce business is a matter that is hard to predict. Some of them have said that they would discontinue handling fruits and produce through their agents, but it seems they had their fingers crossed while they were talking as there are still good reasons to believe that they are doing as much business now as they ever did. To say the least, they will bear watching and unless they are driven out of the business it is doubtful

if they will ever relinquish such a juicy graft, and one which they can work even under the nose of a crafty produce man without his knowledge unless he is a good detective and sits up nights.

While I am talking about these express matters I want to say that it is not too much to hope for the time to come when the service supposed to be rendered by the express companies will be discharged by the railroads themselves. It would take a mind more analytical than the author's, and a philosophy more erudite than he shall ever dare profess, to define precisely what the line of demarcation is between the service rendered by railroads and express companies, and to show that the express companies have any real excuse for a separate existence.

But so long as the two forms of transportation are distinguishable in practice we can consider the express evils on their own basis. Obviously, their solution depends upon concerted efforts among the trade, and if there are no laws in existence now which are sufficient to cope with this, as well as other transportation evils, it is up to the produce interests to join hands with others who are similarly afflicted and secure such legislation as may be necessary to bring relief.

It is probably a bad idea to look for a panacea for transportation ills and evils of all kinds instead of trying to work out an individual remedy for every peculiar ill or evil.

Some people in the trade have been so unsophisticated as to regard the Hepburn bill, commonly known as the rate law, passed by Congress several years ago, as a sort of cure-all. There can be no doubt that this law has eliminated certain evils and cured certain defects, but it is equally certain that there are still a number of bad things in traffic which appear to have escaped its operation entirely. No doubt this new law is a step in the right direction, for its provisions have in a measure put a check on the advantages obtained by the big shippers as against the small shippers. It has also effectively abolished the rebate in practice as such, and has given the authorities a better chance to get a glimpse at the inner workings of the transportation machine.

But I contend that the rate law cannot by any means be considered a panacea for traffic abuses. Further legislation both as relates to interstate and intrastate traffic will no doubt have to be secured in the course of the next few years, and it is up to the people in the trade to do their duty and aid in the passing of such laws as will best protect their rights and their property.

Before closing this chapter I want to say a few words on behalf of some of the transportation men,—that is the minor officials, solicitors, clerks, agents, and even the yard men and train crews themselves with which the trade is touching elbows and meeting every day.

Many of these fellows are real friends of reforms which they are powerless to make. These solicitors who are constantly visible on the landscape when they get on trail of some traffic are hard to head off from the man who has the routing of it. They are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and they seem to multiply faster than any other species of mankind for they are ever increasing, and every generation of them seems to possess better olfactories with which to smell out traffic and each succeeding generation also seems to be born with a richer fund of stories.

It is to be regretted that the kind of men at the top of the transportation business are not the same kind of broad-gauge, jovial, fair-minded fellows we usually find in the lower walks of the business. There are some exceptions, I know, in both divisions but there are few among the higher officials who have the respect and confidence of the shipping public as is the case with the men you generally meet in the lower ranks.

## CHAPTER VII

### CO-OPERATION

The present age is one of co-operation although competition is not yet eliminated from the realm of commercial affairs, and in all probability never will be. But it is true that the benefits of co-operation overbalance the advantages of competition in a majority of cases, especially when competition is no more than a jealous contest.

The co-operative idea is to be found in the produce trade more and more every year, and it may be predicted with reasonable certainty that there will be still more co-operation as its benefits become better understood.

But there are limitations to the application of the co-operative principle as it relates to the produce business, for the nature of the business precludes the formation of such a thing as a produce trust, which is the logical point or the ultimate end to which co-operation tends, despite the fact that we are treated to a lot of dope in the papers now and then about a trust controlling the egg market or a combine forcing apple prices up,—or an absolute corner in Hubbard squashes.

Those on the inside know the futility of trying to form or operate a produce trust. It is barely possible that some particular commodity may be juggled with now and then, but it is written in the history of some of these deals that fingers have been burned, and losses have been incurred that almost take on the aspect of a bear raid on the stock exchange when panic seizes the whole speculating fraternity and prices go tumbling like so much lead.

Possibly the main reason why no general trust can be formed in the produce field is because the various commodities are gathered from such a widely separated territory, and because the articles embraced in the business are produced and marketed by so many different people of widely different views on politics, religion and business itself, that it is next kin to impossible for a trust or combine to be formed that will be like



the steel trust, the oil trust or the sugar trust. The basic idea of a trust is to control both the source of supply and the means of distribution. So long as different races, conditions and classes of people devote themselves to the production and marketing of all kinds of produce it is only a remote possibility that a produce or fruit combination resting on the co-operative idea, embracing all kinds of commodities, will ever be put into practice for any considerable time.

But the co-operative principle does not necessarily imply that a trust must be formed to enjoy a great many benefits that come from working together among the various branches of the trade. Growers and shippers may form associations, and associations may band themselves into federations for the purpose of lending one another assistance in growing and marketing, and secure excellent results under a liberal plan of allowing individuals to exercise their own judgment within certain limits. Dealers and jobbers may be of great assistance to one another in the exchange of information, or in buying and selling without interfering in the slightest with one another's affairs, and without putting any barriers whatever in the way of free trading.

Co-operation is the very essence of the association idea. In a later chapter I shall have considerable to say on the subject of associations; I shall point out some of their benefits, and shall try to show some of their weaknesses and short comings, as well as offer some suggestions for their proper regulation.

Ideal co-operation may be properly said to rest on the golden rule. The theory is very pretty, but its application in every day practice is often extremely difficult, sometimes utterly impossible. Selfishness kills co-operation just as Jack Frost plays havoc with tender vegetation. Men who allow the rim of the dollar to obscure their horizon so completely as to shut out of view the prosperity and happiness of their fellows, and also their competitors, can hardly be expected to see how legitimate co-operation is a panacea for some commercial disorders and a relief for nearly all economic ills. Those men who doubt the benefits of correct co-operation are the jay birds of business who argue that there is no such thing as music and then sing to prove it.

A line such as the produce business, so fraught with ups and downs, so punctuated with disappointments, hard knocks, losses, headaches and heartaches, should be full of co-operation and sympathy. Instead of the glad hand and a word of encouragement, a fellow playing in hard luck generally gets a shrug of the shoulders and the icy stare from his produce competitors, or else the wretches may assume a grandiloquent air, remain absolutely impassive and hand the poor unfortunate cuss a "lemon"

when he may be sweating blood over a few cars of these sour globules that have gone off a dollar a box as the weather went off a few degrees.

The man or firm who gloats over their competitors' misfortunes are simply heathens who know nothing of the higher philosophy which teaches the brotherhood of mankind. Unless dealers, growers, shippers, in fact, everybody in the trade wishes everyone else a fair measure of success and prosperity, they are a menace to the trade and are hardly entitled to the measly dollars they pile up and thus contaminate with their very touch. There is business enough for everybody so long as everybody is decent, plays fair and plugs hard.

Pray do not think I am purposely digressing for I am only emphasizing the desirability of sensible co-operation by presenting its contrary,—insane competition. Because some other association winds up the season with better profits than another, because some other commission man lands a big contract that another was trying to land, or because some competitor secures a big order others were figuring on, or catches one of your old customers, what is the use of making faces? Cheer up! In the language of the immortal poet "forget it."

The other association has no patent on its system; you should have no fly specks on yours; you dyspeptic, old grouch of a dealer, do you not realize that you have no mortgage on the buying or selling ends of a majority of your trade, that it is perhaps best to swap around occasionally, that you probably had it coming to you to lose part of your trade just to remind you that your customer and your competitor are in the same "swimming hole" with you and they are using the same "spring board" that you are trying to hog for yourself, but which belongs to all the "boys." Just remember you had to get your trade away from somebody once upon a time.

Co-operation means not only to live and let live, but it carries an injunction to help the other fellow live. I am not writing after returning from preaching, nor am I putting it on paper because it reads nicely, but I am trying to impress it upon you that by helping others you help yourself. The effort is worth while to promote good cheer in the trade, and to insure peace and progress among your fellows.

It is quite true that co-operation as applied to produce matters has an infinite range, extending all the way from the friendly word of encouragement to the investment of a large part of your capital in a deal where you depend largely upon your judgment and the honesty of your associates who may be in a sense your competitors, maybe your saviors in a business way.

I suppose it will not be startling news to some that a number of

produce people have become sufficiently civilized to join hands in lots of deals, although they may be engaged in a continual friendly contest over certain other trade affairs. In the matter of cutting down expenses in buying or soliciting the plan often works like a charm, especially where houses in different markets get together on the scheme, and where everybody knows what he is expected to do and what he must do if he stays in the "life boat." Shippers who are consigning cars to the same market find it possible to have a man or several men as occasion requires to look after shipments when they arrive at destination, and even while they are in transit. It would be impossible for the individual shipper to undertake such a scheme unless his operations were far in excess of the average.

An excellent idea of the positive and lasting good coming from the right kind of co-operation may be found in the National League of Commission Merchants, the Western Fruit Jobbers Association, the International Apple Shippers Association, the various local exchanges in different markets, the hundreds of associations for the marketing of fruits, vegetables and produce throughout the country, and also in the various clubs among produce people which are really helpful to their members.

These organizations wield a tremendous moral as well as political power, besides exerting a beneficent influence upon their members in many respects. The sum total of their operations has been to secure improved conditions in the trade, to disseminate valuable information, to help prevent losses in business, to provide improved methods of trading, to discover and develop new markets, to get the best results in grading and packing, to work for the passage of good laws, to control and remedy transportation abuses, etc., etc., in short, to do a hundred and one things that cannot be done well, if at all, where individuals or firms are working separately and independently; and last but not least, to promote a fraternal feeling among the trade and convince the men engaged in the business that they are not living for themselves alone, and that the fullest measure of success means that a broad, sensible course must be adopted and followed always by everybody in the trade if his influence is to be worth while and if his success is to be real and lasting.

If reasonable concerted effort is made along the right lines the results obtained are often wonderful. Two firms or individuals can co-operate just as they can compete. The same applies to a hundred or a thousand. But they must be honest, have confidence in one another, and must have a correct system of trading, and besides be aggressive if the plan of co-operation is to succeed.

As pretty as the theory of co-operation is, and as nicely as the scheme works if properly planned and pushed, still if it is carried too far it usually produces atrophy instead of action, weakness instead of strength.



"PEACHES" AND CELERY—THE TWO LEADING PRODUCTS AT SANFORD, FLORIDA



PICKING BERRIES NEAR BORDEN, INDIANA

There is always the danger of putting a bar on individual effort which is the essential factor in achieving the highest success in modern business just as it is true in our system of government that the individual is intended to be left with as much freedom of action as possible, although the chief idea of a democracy is that we shall help bear one another's burdens and especially that the strong shall help the weak. This applies to all broad matters bearing on the common good.

The seeming conflict with the co-operative idea is explained by allowing everyone to perform such matters alone if he can best attend to them in that way, and to join hands and hearts with others when occasion demands, and to continue the joint operation so long as common sense or the circumstances may require. I know there is such a thing as co-operation gone wild just as there is competition gone wild, and I shall have more to say on this subject later on.

Above all, we must recognize common sense as a guide. Do not undertake to make the co-operative idea do the impossible, nor perform for you what you could and should do on your own account.

The co-operative idea can easily be ridden to death like a willing horse.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ASSOCIATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Whatever else may be said on the subject of associations it remains clear that the plan involves a system. Where several score or several hundred individual growers or producers unite in marketing their fruits or produce through a centralized agency a big advantage should result in the cutting down of overhead expenses, and under an economical administration the cost of marketing is reduced to the minimum.

Again, in the matter of turning out the best grade and pack the association plan makes it possible to obtain the best and most experienced help which may cost considerably more than an individual would care to spend unless he conducted an extensive business. Moreover, in the matter of selling the centralized plan whereby all orders are booked through one office and all shipments and deliveries are kept track of, and whereby transportation is made a specialty, there is no doubt but the association plan is to be soundly endorsed.

I think there is little question but that the general benefits from co-operation justify growers and shippers in forming such organizations as may seem necessary to accomplish certain ends.

Naturally, the main difficulty with the association system is to find competent, honest men to take charge of the business and handle it properly.

The very best system in the hands of the wrong kind of men overbalances the benefits from co-operation. There have been numerous instances of plain graft among association officials in the past, and it seems there is no way of preventing certain irregularities except by finding the right men and paying a sufficient price for their services to place them beyond the influence of "easy money" which may be handed to them by various interests for doing or not doing certain things in a particular way.

It would be unfair, I know, to the honest officials for the author to

make this statement so broad as to include all officials, for there is no doubt but the average officials of associations handling fruits and produce are good business men who are known to have characters above reproach; they have generally secured fine results for growers and shippers and most of them are entitled to more money for their services than they are accustomed to receive.

But I cannot refrain from laying stress on the importance of growers and shippers keeping their eyes wide open if there is cause for suspicion that their interests are not being properly served, although when they strike a bad season or have an unprofitable deal it is unwise as well as unjust to conclude that the trouble lies with their association management until they have made a thorough investigation of the facts involved, and have conferred with other members of the association on the subject.

Dishonesty, like murder, will out. A crafty individual may ingratiate himself in the esteem and confidence of growers so that he literally has them wrapped around his finger, and although he may be making them money every year, he may also be receiving rebates, rake-offs or other forms of graft that will ultimately make him rich beyond the dreams of avarice. The author hopes that the honest element, which predominates among association officials, will only consider these statements in the spirit in which they are intended. He who strives to discharge his obligations faithfully and intelligently, although he may suffer frequent reverses, will have the support and sympathy of his fellow men provided they have reasonable assurance that he is doing the best he can and that possibly the same results would accrue under the direction of any other individual who might be selected to take his place.

With reference to the duties of an association manager the following may be said to be true:

The work of a manager is a very complicated piece of business. It taxes his ingenuity to the limit to execute it with credit and satisfaction. It is a business that requires experience. It properly belongs to an expert, a tactician, a diplomat. The intricacies of the business can not be learned and mastered in a single season. If, after a manager has exhausted all his skill, all his tactics, all his schemes of diplomacy, all his power of manipulation, all his strength of thought and energy of action, he does not overcome his difficulties and please his people, he may at least comfort himself with the hope that in spite of these things he may yet enter the kingdom of Heaven, for they who enter there are said to come up out of great tribulations.

We read in sacred story of a wonderful fruit land in a distant country whence, because they are so well pleased, no traveler e'er returns. In



that land the orchards are planted in the fertile valleys close beside the living streams that unceasingly flow from the everlasting hills. The orchards are irrigated and cultivated without toil and without expense, and they flourish so richly that the trees never wither and the branches never perish. The trees bear not a single variety of fruit but twelve, each ripening in its month, so that the fruit is always fresh and the supply is always full. The fruit is faultless, perfect in form and size, glorious in color and exquisite in flavor. No sting of curculio is seen, no speck of fungus fever, no ugly wiggling worm. Moreover, the crops are abundant. There is enough for all. And the fruit is free, alike to rich and poor. It may be purchased without money and without price. There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary managers are at rest, for trials and difficulties are no more.

There has been more or less controversy over the question of pooling among growers and shippers and the subject still seems to rest on debatable ground, although there appears to be ample experience to sustain the pooling system as being legitimate and correct.

When contracts are made by an association with an individual to market certain commodities through the association under certain conditions, it seems no more than reasonable and right that both parties to the contract make a faithful endeavor to discharge their obligations under the terms of their contract or agreement. Too often growers and shippers get the idea that they can squirm out of their contracts with impunity and seem to forget that they are duty-bound to stick up to their agreements for the mutual protection of themselves and neighbors. Nearly every season there is more or less trouble with associations all over the country when a few members decide to pull out and market their products independently after they have entered into a hard and fast contract to ship or sell through an association.

Numerous cases involving disputes over the rights of the grower or shipper in matters of this kind have found their way into the courts, and in a majority of cases, unless there are extenuating circumstances, the courts have held that when growers pool their interests they are bound to market their goods as their contracts provide. This is the only common sense view to take, for if one grower or shipper has the right to pull out of an association after he has become a member and agreed to abide by its general regulations, there is no reason why the second or third or even all of the growers would not also have the right to withdraw, and completely disrupt the best organized and best operated association in the country.

Those growers or shippers who may have any reasonable doubt about

the advantages of joining an association and who do not feel sure they can execute its general orders and fulfill whatever contract they enter into with the association would better not join in the first instance. Some men in nearly every organization seem to be gifted principally with making trouble, and the quicker such men are thrown overboard, if they cannot be controlled, the better for all parties concerned.

Now and then members of associations, as well as some people in the trade generally, are unreasonable in their demands and expect too much of the association plan. The grower or shipper who joins an organization which is devoted to the growing or the marketing of fruits and produce should not expect the organization to perform miracles. After all, the best organization represents so many individual units as are embraced in its membership and its official staff.

However complete the organization may be, however superb the talent it may employ to do its thinking and marketing, there are lots of things it cannot accomplish, although there are many things it can and may accomplish. For example, unless every individual grower observes the regulations covering grading and packing it is certain that his fruits or products will give trouble.

The success or failure of an association depends almost entirely on the class of goods it has to market and the way those goods are prepared and handled from the time they leave the points of origin until they reach the consumer, and I think it unnecessary to spend more time trying to make it clear that the individual who is a member of an association should not depend upon the organization to do all of his thinking, nor should he try to force the organization to perform unreasonable feats such as getting the highest market prices for inferior, off grade fruits and produce.

Very likely it is true that because the centralized co-operative plan succeeds in making money by saving money on marketing a certain commodity, or if there is a special run of good luck in a given season, it naturally gives rise to a degree of reliance upon the organization for making good always thereafter in marketing nearly every commodity or in any other matter. And if the most sanguine expectations are not realized there may be trouble to follow.

It is a question if it is not a mixed blessing when officials, and the management of such organizations generally, are constantly striving for record breaking deals in the way of season's profits. By this I mean to say, when high prices are obtained for oranges this year, which may be due to extraordinary conditions, the returns next year, probably with an entirely different set of conditions, may be lower but may represent even greater

skill in handling than the previous season. But now and then the managements of different organizations get the riot act read to them for no other reason, and they are confronted with dismissal or embarrassment because they did not set a new record above their predecessors which record was possibly accidental, wholly or in part.

It is usually best for officials to promise little beyond faithful, honest services and guarantee nothing in the way of returns but the best average the goods to be sold will obtain.

No man should allow himself to become an association official or to become identified with the management of an organization of this kind unless he has the confidence of his constituents and also has a full grasp of the duties he is expected to perform. He should strive diligently to see that full justice is done to everybody, and if it bankrupts the organization he should strive to preserve the integrity of his association, and maintain its reputation for straightforward dealing and for fulfilling its contracts. If certain goods have been sold for future delivery and if the market goes higher and better prices can be realized by jumping contracts, the honest official will see that the tricky member is compelled to toe the mark. Those officials who are lax in this respect and allow such business will bear watching among the growers and shippers themselves. The only man worth while trying to in the business world is the fellow who is honest in all things and who will insist that his own people play fair if they are going to expect others to do so.

Good judgment should be used, of course, in the matter of making contracts, securing advances, etc., as in all things else pertaining to the management of an association. A careful survey should be made and the conditions should be sized up as well as possible. Sometimes, and for some classes of fruits and vegetables especially, arrangements are made for marketing long before the goods are ready for shipment. In such cases it is utterly impossible to say what the future has in store and it is purely in the light of past experience and the prospects ahead that contracts or promises are made.

In all cases it is the best plan to connect with reliable commission men or marketing agents, and lay plans well in advance for distributing the products in prospect. Every detail should be carefully arranged and everybody should know what he is expected to do and when it is to be done. Packages should be provided and transportation facilities and requirements looked into, and every other matter settled so far as can be.

Another thing that is highly important is the subject of properly advertising whatever products are to be grown and marketed. Whenever possible the quantity to be shipped, the grade, pack, brands or marks

should be published to the world, but since the whole world cannot be reached it is well to try to reach that highly important part known as the trade, and which is the essential part to make the proper plea before, for the public uses what goods are put up and offered for sale and the average consumer has no idea whatever about who grows or ships what he buys daily in the different markets.

But the trade is watching and keeping up with such matters and if the individual or the association has an article of quality that can be had at the right price it will be sought after if it is well known.

To make it known is to advertise it. But publicity costs money and the association or individual should not object to spending a reasonable sum for advertising in different publications, and in other ways to make the correct impression on the trade that is expected to serve the goods out to the general public.

It is well enough to have growers' names on wrappers, baskets, boxes, or barrels so as to reach the consumer direct, or even to set aside an appropriation for use in a general campaign of publicity calling attention of the public to certain merits of certain products. But usually such publicity comes high and is hardly so effective as that which appeals directly to the trade, for it is here the test of merit must be made. It does little good for one to claim that "Such and Such" grapes grown by "So and So" are the best to be had and go to the consumer with such argument, if the aforesaid consumer can find out even from the despised huckster that "Such and Such" grapes are inferior to "This and That" grapes, and what is worse he may produce the "deadly parallel" by exhibiting some of both kinds.

By all means growers should strive to produce quality, to give honest goods and honest pack and weight for honest money, and let the trade know about it. It is no use trying to fool men who know more about the subject under treatment than you do.

What has been said in regard to associations applies also to individuals. After all, the association is only an aggregation of individuals and what is good for one is good for the other and vice versa. But there are cases where the individual possesses advantages over and above the association and this is especially true of certain articles in certain seasons.

Roughly speaking, the association represents wholesale dealing; the individual retail. The one is co-operative and liberal; the other is monopolistic and selfish. Varying circumstances justify both systems in marketing, but there can be no doubt that the individual who has something to put on the market, and if he knows the ropes thoroughly can

save himself the extra pains and expense involved in marketing through an association by attending to his own business. Every grower or shipper must be his own judge of certain matters, even when an association is available and he is a member, provided he keeps his pledges as to marketing.

Some articles in the fruit and produce line are almost impossible of being successfully handled through an association. This is especially true of northern staples such as potatoes, onions, cabbage, etc., which are handled through a long season and which at times become very speculative.

It is worthy of note that associations, or for that matter, any co-operative organization is unfitted for speculation. Such organizations are good at making money, but are usually hard losers. Officers of associations know what it means to fail to take advantage of the market, although it may be beyond human ken to say what the advantage of the market is until it is past and gone. Here is a case where the individual has a great advantage over the association and there is no way to offset that advantage, as the individual who possesses enough foresight to be a good speculator for himself generally has enough sense to be his own beneficiary and to limit his operations to his own investments. After all, an association is intended mainly to market fruits and produce and not for speculative purposes, although it may be the creature of circumstance and may be forced into speculation to a greater or lesser degree. On the contrary, the individual needs only the opportunity to make him become a speculator, and he has no one but himself to account to if he should lose out.

Among the disadvantages of an association is the red tape and the awkwardness in the management of a big organization. If a change of policy is necessary it takes a great deal more effort usually to make such changes than is necessary when an individual desires to make them.

The author has been asked again and again for an opinion as to when it is worth while to form an association and how many members there should be. To all such inquiries he would reply: No fixed rule can be established. Perhaps all those who feel disposed should join associations if they are in reach of one, and associations should be organized where there are enough growers or shippers, or enough of either or both who feel that their interests can be served best by an organization. An association can be incorporated with little expense, or it may be loosely organized in the shape of a society; it may have a rigid contract with all members or it may be so liberal as to allow individual members to do as they please so long as certain lines are not transgressed.



GROUP OF FRUIT PACKERS—COLORADO



HARVESTING HEAD LETTUCE—ANNANDALE FARM, DULUTH, MINN.





EXAMINING PEACH BLOOM AFTER A "LATE COLD SNAP"—MICHIGAN SCENE

It is hardly worth while to go into a minute discussion of association management for such is purely detail, and anything of this character would be subject to exceptions which would possibly be of no use to a majority of organizations.

This much I will say, however: All associations should be run on a broad gauge system and so far as possible should not conflict with natural rights or individual effort and initiative. By no means should red tape and parliamentary practice take the place of common sense and the fraternal spirit so necessary to make any organization a success.

The association should recognize its limitations and never undertake the impossible. Because it can do one thing well is no proof that it can do all things well, and it should, therefore, be held to its original purpose and its members and officials should strive always to make the organization beneficial, instructive and elevating to the community, the trade and to the whole country. Neither the association nor the individual grower can evade the great law of service, and it is to accomplish a more effective service in an organized capacity that any association should be formed.

For the benefit of growers in many localities I have thought it may be well to include in full the articles pertaining to the organization and management of an association, it being substantially the same as the constitution and by-laws of one of the leading fruit growers' organizations in the southwest. It should be borne in mind, however, that for various reasons the articles I suggest as a pattern may have to be varied considerably to cover certain peculiarities in some other organization designed for some other purpose than the handling of fruits. The services of a good lawyer should be sought if necessary to get an organization together in working order and to make sure that no state or federal laws are being violated.

The articles above referred to are as follows:

#### PREAMBLE

For the purpose of co-operating in the growing and marketing of fruits and vegetables, and in providing packages and spraying materials, fertilizers, etc., for same, we, whose names are hereto annexed, adopt the following constitution and by-laws:

#### CONSTITUTION

Article I. This organization shall be known as the ——

Article II. The officers of this association shall be



president, vice president, recording secretary, treasurer, business manager, and a business committee consisting of five members, including the business manager, all of said officers to be elected by ballot in July of each year. The business committee to be elected first. A majority of all ballots cast shall be necessary to elect. No member of this association shall hold more than one office in the association at one time, except the business manager, who is also required to be a member of the business committee. Only those of good, moral character shall be eligible as a member of the business committee.

Article III. This association shall meet on the — of each month at the — at — o'clock p. m., unless adjourned to meet elsewhere.

Article IV. Any person who is a horticulturist or agriculturist may make application for membership (in writing), and must be recommended by two members of the association. The membership fee of one dollar, and the annual dues of one dollar, must accompany the application and be offered at a regular meeting by some member of the association. The application will then be referred to a committee of three members and laid over to next regular meeting, when if report of committee is favorable it shall be balloted upon. An applicant to be elected must receive two-thirds of all votes cast. Applications for membership must be filed not later than the March meeting in order to enable the applicant to ship with the association the current year.

Article V. When growers in this association ship berries as a firm or company, each individual member of the firm or company must become a member of the association. No firm or company will be allowed to vote by proxy on any proposition before the association.

Article VI. The annual dues of this association shall be one dollar, payable July 1 each year.

Article VII. A quorum shall consist of seven members to do business.

Article VIII. In case of a vacancy in office the vacancy shall be filled at the first regular meeting or in case of emergency at a called meeting.

Article IX. This constitution may be amended at any

regular meeting by a three-fourths vote of the members present, provided the proposed amendment shall have been written and in the hands of the secretary and read by him at two regular meetings previously.

#### BY-LAWS

No. 1. All officers of this association shall assume the duties of their respective offices at the August meeting and perform the duties required of them by the rules of the association. The president shall call special meetings when requested to do so by the business committee or on petition of five members of the association. The deliberations of this association shall be governed by the rules of Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary Usages.

No. 2. The vice president shall, in the absence of the president, perform the duties of the president. In the absence of both president and vice president, a temporary chairman may be elected by the association. The chaplain shall conduct the devotional exercises of the association.

No. 3. The recording secretary shall keep an accurate minute or record of all the transactions of the association. He shall be the keeper of all the papers and records of the association except his own bond. He shall collect all moneys due the association for dues, fees, fines and forfeitures. He shall pay over all moneys coming into his hands to the treasurer every month, taking the treasurer's receipt therefor, and file said receipt with the auditing committee as soon as they are appointed. He shall give a bond of four hundred dollars, signed by two good securities. Said bond shall be kept by the president. He shall receive twenty-five dollars per year for his services.

No. 4. The treasurer shall receive all moneys belonging to the association from the hands of the recording secretary, giving his receipt therefor; render a true account of all moneys received and paid out and to whom paid. He will pay out money on warrants ordered by the association and signed by the president and secretary. He shall give a bond of one thousand dollars signed by two or more good securities, and he shall receive twenty-five dollars per year for his services.

No. 5. The business manager shall act as secretary and treasurer of the business committee. He shall keep a full and correct record of all transactions of the committee and attend to all the correspondence of the association. He shall receive all the returns from the commission merchants and other sources, and make disposition of same as quickly as possible as directed by No. 14 of the by-laws. When elected he shall execute a satisfactory bond in the sum of \$25,000 to the association as individual members, for the faithful performance of the duties required of him as secretary and treasurer. He shall receive for his services one per cent of the gross sales of all fruits and berries shipped. He shall employ a bookkeeper and all other help needed at the shipping sheds at salaries which, in his judgment, are economical to the association, and at the same time just to the one employed. The salary of the manager, and other help, shall be paid out of a fund created for this purpose. He shall have full control of the shipping sheds. He shall present his books and accounts to the auditing committee when said committee is appointed to examine the accounts of this association as provided by No. 18 of the by-laws.

No. 5. (Sec. 1.) The business committee as soon as they shall have been elected, shall organize by electing one of their number chairman. They shall meet at the call of their chairman. They shall have power over the actions of the business manager as a whole, and in case of sickness, death or any other disability of the manager during the shipping season, shall select a temporary manager. The chairman and each member of the committee, excepting the business manager, shall receive two dollars each meeting of the committee, for members in attendance. It shall be the duty of the business committee to select the commission merchants who shall handle the berries of the association.

No. 5. (Sec. 2.) For the purpose of paying the business manager, bookkeeper and all other help and expenses incurred in the shipment of berries, there shall be set aside two per cent of the gross sales of all shipments. After all salaries and expenses have been paid, the remainder of this fund to be pro-rated to the growers as other receipts. All of the bonds given by members of this association shall be approved by the association.

No. 6. Each officer, committee, agent, or any other member shall present to the association for approval by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting an itemized account of any expense to which he may have been, and upon such approval, a warrant shall be issued in his favor on the treasurer.

No. 7. Nothing shall be so construed as to hold any member responsible for the provisions of the constitution or by-laws, who shall voluntarily withdraw from the association or quit the business of fruit growing.

No. 8. Any member withdrawing from the association shall be entitled to receive his dividend of the unexpended rebate, but shall forfeit to the association all other money belonging thereto.

No. 9. A voter in this organization shall be a member who is a grower of fruits or berries. No member shall have more than one vote on any subject.

No. 10. All members of this association must buy all of their crate or spraying materials through the association.

No. 11. All members obligate themselves to turn over all fruits or berries to the business committee, to be shipped by them, except those they may need to supply home demand, or for shipment to friends. In no case shall any member be allowed to sell fruits or berries for shipment, unless he obtains consent of the business committee to do so. Upon complaint of any one that a member violates the above obligation, the business committee shall make an investigation at once, and if found guilty, the secretary shall be notified to drop his name from the membership list. It is of great importance that the growers deliver all fruit to the management, that commission houses arranged with may not at any time be disappointed by not receiving expected shipments. Each grower must deliver or be in line ready to deliver at the shipping sheds all fruits or berries he has to ship each day not later than ten (10) o'clock p. m.

No. 12. (a) The grades of strawberries will be two, designated as "A" and "B" (the "B" grades blank). The "A" grade must be strictly choice, firm, sound stock, of good size. The "B" grade must also be firm and sound, but may be somewhat smaller. Where the difference in selling price is not noted on account sales of receivers, the sec-

retary shall make division on a basis of a difference of 25 cents per crate between the two grades. Fruit that is too soft or otherwise unfit to grade "B" will be rejected. After inspection at shipping sheds berries that grade "A" will have the crates stamped on both ends with the association's trade mark which shall read as follows, viz:

(Whatever name of brand and association may be.)

No. 12. (b) (Grading and packing rules for other, fruits or vegetables may be put here.)

No. 13. It shall be the duty of the business committee to employ a man of good judgment and ability to inspect all fruit delivered by growers for shipment, and he shall be given as many assistants as are necessary; and he shall have power to change grades and reject any and all fruit which, in his judgment, and the judgment of the business committee, is unfit for shipment.

No. 14. Each grower shall receive the average price per crate of each grade each day. Should it be necessary to hold over fruits or berries from one day to the following day for shipment, then the number carried over shall be disbursed with that day's shipment. A clean-up shall appear as having been made each day.

No. 15. The secretary receiving fruits or berries must give each grower a receipt for the number of crates of fruits or berries delivered designating the number of crates of each grade.

No. 16. All members obligate themselves to be governed by the decision of the association in regard to the prices to be paid for picking fruits or berries, and they agree that they will not in any manner, directly or indirectly, such as by a gift, premium, or by counting more trays, baskets or quarts than has actually been received at the packing sheds, or through any member of the family, or any other individual, pay more than the price agreed upon by the association. The penalty for violation of this obligation shall be the withholding of thirty-five cents a crate for all berries and fifty cents a bushel for peaches received in violation of the above named by-law. All complaints shall be filed with the field inspectors who shall investigate the matter and immediately report to the business committee, who shall act upon the matter promptly,

and the funds accruing from fines shall be turned into the general treasury. A copy of this penalty clause shall be incorporated into the rules for the packing sheds.

No. 17. The business committee shall have power to appoint a man as marshal if necessary, whose duty it shall be to see that each member shall be allowed to unload his berries in the order in which he may come to the unloading place. He shall see that no one drives out of his regular turn. Any dispute between growers shall be settled by the marshal. Any grower who shall refuse to abide by the decision of the marshal shall forfeit his place and go back behind every wagon present.

No. 18. The president shall, at the regular meeting in June of each year, appoint the auditing committee, consisting of two members, whose duty it shall be to examine the books and accounts of the officers of the association and business committee and report in writing at the regular meeting held in July following. The auditing committee shall each receive two dollars per day as compensation for the time required to examine the books and accounts submitted to them.

No. 19. On any motion the vote shall be yea or nay unless some member shall request the vote being taken by ballot; and upon such request being made, the president shall appoint two tellers to take the ballots; and when the voting is by ballot every member present shall vote unless he is excused by the president, provided he is entitled to a vote. Any voter refusing to vote, who has not been excused by the president, shall forfeit to the association fifty cents. A voter shall be a member in good standing.

No. 20. Any member who shall be in arrears for dues three months shall forfeit his or her vote and all benefits of the association and when six months in arrears shall stand suspended from the association.

No. 21. Any member who shall have been proved guilty of fraud or immoral conduct, or failed to meet his just obligations, or of any other act so as to affect the credit and good standing of the association shall be barred from membership.

No. 22. All members must acquaint themselves with the constitution and by-laws and annex their names thereto.

No. 23. These by-laws may be amended in accordance with Article 9 of the constitution.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Calling House to Order.
2. Calling Roll of Members.
3. Reading Minutes of Previous Meeting.
4. Reading Correspondence.
5. Reports of Committees.
6. Election of Officers.
7. Applications for Membership.
8. Balloting on Applications.
9. Unfinished Business.
10. Bills and Accounts Read and Disposed of.
11. New Business.
12. Discussion.

## CHAPTER IX

### QUALITY VS. QUANTITY

The world generally has come to recognize the fact that in the long run it is quality and not quantity that counts.

This truth is becoming better known and more fully realized every day by all branches of the produce trade. It frequently occurs that a small select lot of fruits or produce sells for more than a whole cargo of rubbish will bring. I infer a sufficient number of shippers and dealers have tasted the benefits of proper selection and correct grading or packing to make any argument unnecessary to show that it pays to strive for a standard that will be so good as to be almost without competition when it comes to marketing.

Of course, if the theory of quality is carried to the extreme it means a limited amount of goods at high prices. For example, if all the onions in the country were put into one packing house and graded, putting only strictly uniform A1 stock together there would be less onions in the A1 class than we would suppose, but it cannot be denied that strictly A1 prices could be obtained for them and once the pack or brand became known it would sell itself for all time to come at a premium so long as the quality might be kept up.

Ample proof that this theory is correct is found in the history of the apple deal in the far northwest. The way quality is emphasized in preparing Oregon and Washington apples for market seems funny to an outsider who is so ignorant as to assume that "apples are apples" no matter how they are put up. But when we go into the matter for a closer investigation we find that while all apples are apples, there is a great difference in price that makes off-grade stock seem like so much chaff compared with the scientific, superb pack of apples put up in the Northwestern states, and which bring the highest prices in both American and European markets. By way of courtesy to growers of apples in Idaho, Montana, Colorado, California and New Mexico, I should say



these people are also careful in their pack, although they have not reached the high degree of skill to be found in Oregon and Washington where the theory and practice of correct apple growing and packing has doubtless approached about as near perfection as our civilization has seen or will ever see.

What applies to apples also holds true of almost every commodity in the produce field so far as the premium for quality is concerned. It seems there is no getting enough of the best in some kinds of stock. Buyers often take everything in sight at high prices and are often found looking for more. In the larger cities where there are enormous lines of goods, the select stock shows up to far better advantage when compared with off-grade, inferior stuff. Where lots of goods are available it naturally follows that more accurate comparison can be made. Often when berries are at their height it is surprising to see how buyers will snap up fancy cases at a premium and leave off-grade stock untouched although it is offered at bargain counter rates.

Probably the best explanation for this is that there is enough high class trade to justify paying a good premium. But because more money is paid for fine stock is no reason why such stock is more expensive, for the inferior stock may be dear at any price, however cheap it may seem. A steadily increasing and certainly a major part of humanity is learning the great secret that the first or initial cost of any article amounts to little so long as the article bought will give entire satisfaction and will yield whatever service may be reasonably required. In other words, that it is actually worth the money paid for it.

Aside from his ability to realize more spot cash for his produce if its quality is the best, the grower or shipper will find it worth his while from an advertising standpoint to put up the right kind of pack and establish his brands or marks. Everybody in the trade knows that certain brands of certain articles are always in demand at good prices.

A good thing is not usually overlooked or forgotten by people. If your fruits or produce possess fine quality and make money for wholesaler, jobber and retailer, you can rest assured your pack or your stock will be sought after so long as it continues to have the merit that makes money.

Right here I want to emphasize the absolute necessity of keeping brands and marks up to the standard claimed for them. It does little good to work up a good brand that represents the best quality and then substitute stock of poorer quality and expect the brand to get the price. A label is a good thing, but it has its limitations: Fine feathers do not make fine birds, nor do catchy marks and brands supply quality in the contents of a package to which the aforesaid fancy labels may be affixed.

But a good label is a great help in handling good produce of all kinds, and especially where a considerable quantity is to be had year after year. I am aware that it is a difficult undertaking to have a mark or brand, or even a grade for every article handled, but so far as possible an effort should be made to grade all kinds of fruits, and produce and if properly done the results will be surprising. A good brand well established is worth a fortune in itself.

Of course, the range in the make-up of brands and marks is capable of infinite variety. They may take their name and style of make-up from the commodity they cover, or from the section where produced, or maybe from the name of the individual or firm that does the growing, packing or selling. Many good brands are taken from catchy everyday names, which have the great advantage of being short and easily remembered, while others are based on various suitable things. It goes without saying that a brand or mark should be considered chiefly from the standpoint of an advertisement, and like all advertising, it should be concise and aim to tell the truth.

By selecting the proper brand or mark for your goods you should have in mind that you are advertising your goods, yourself, your section, your market and your trade. Good printing and the use of proper colors are also important if the best results are to be hoped for.

I am fully convinced that in the future we shall see more thinking done, and more care exercised among fruit and produce people in the matter of grading, packing, labeling or branding and also to that "steering wheel of commerce,"—advertising. In a later chapter I shall have considerable to say about grading and packing, and shall, therefore, refrain from touching on details in this connection, though proper grading and packing are the parents of quality.

A long stride in the direction of securing better quality in fruits and produce would be made if growers and shippers would only reflect that fancy prices cannot be had for certain goods just because they were sent to market by certain people. By this I mean to say, John Smith cannot look for his peaches to sell for top prices for no other reason than they were grown in his orchard.

Unfortunately, there are lots of people who are so contracted in their range of reason as to believe their products are best because they grew them, and do not stop to think that other people have a right to claim the same thing. If the average grower could only go into one of the larger markets throughout the country and see fruits and produce coming from different sections, and observe the range in prices for quality it would be a great help to the trade generally. If some scheme could

be devised to enlighten shippers and growers in this respect there would be less trouble with undergrade and off-grade shipments.

It is costly experience for many people to find out that it does not pay to mix up shipments indiscriminately. Now and then shippers are misled by commission men who send out reports to the effect that the market is in fine shape and who advise shipping "everything in sight." The market may be, and usually is, in fine shape for all the fine goods that can be had, but it usually is the inferior rubbish that demoralizes prices and ruins the sale even among the better grades of goods.

Growers should never allow the enthusiasm of an unscrupulous or careless dealer to run away with their better judgment and cause them to load up a cargo of good, bad and indifferent stuff and send it along to market only to be sold for charges or sent to the dump. If a little horse sense is used the poor stuff will be kept at home, and the medium grades will be separated from the finest and so arranged that they can be handled intelligently, and a premium can be had for the best stock.

This same argument holds true if goods are being consigned or sold at shipping stations. In either event it is a matter of dollars and cents to the grower and shipper to use caution in dividing up his fruits and produce so that he and all the rest of mankind can tell the difference in their quality and can establish a difference in price on the basis of difference in quality.

Growers and shippers everywhere should make a study of trade requirements and seek to satisfy them. By no means should they aim to gauge the popular demand by their own views and tastes. For instance, an apple man in New York state may prefer Greenings or light colored apples, but as a general thing he finds a Baldwin or a King is preferred by the southern trade mainly because the last named varieties are red. It is needless to go into the why and the wherefore of this or any other idiosyncrasy of commerce. When one is met and is ascertained to be true the next best thing is to yield to its requirements.

In the southwest there are hundreds of people who wonder why the northern markets will not take yam potatoes. This very matter was once up before a meeting of a Texas association when someone suggested that a car of the juicy, candy-like yams be sent to Chicago and distributed among the people as a gift so they might see how fine these potatoes are from the growers' point of view. This suggestion appeared to meet with favor until an elderly grower arose and said, "Now, if those fool people would rather eat our old dry white potatoes I say grow and ship them the kind they want and will pay for." This suggestion was carried and was acted upon unanimously, for it was founded on that

common sense principle that dictates selling people what they want and are willing to pay for.

Life is too short and time is too precious in handling fruits and produce to undertake much missionary work in changing the tastes of people or the requirements of markets. If a dealer or a market, for instance, wants potatoes sacked, by all means supply the demand; if a section wants berries in sixteen quart cases it is wise to use that style of package if it is insisted upon; if Boston wants a brown egg you will find it to your advantage to get that color on the eggs you ship there if you are an egg shipper and do business in that market. There are hundreds of these little whims that come up in the produce business and they are all worthy of serious consideration, for a fortune may depend on their proper observance.

So much has been said and remains yet to be said about plain, everyday honesty as relates to produce matters that I was on the verge of omitting mention of it in this connection. But I cannot if I would. Unless a grower or shipper is honest himself he is unable to draw a clear distinction between what is good and what is not. Too often the grower seeks to deceive the trade with the goods he has to offer.

Quality is based on honesty. It is a process of separating the gold from the dross. To arrive at a working basis for quality it is necessary to have some skill coupled with an honest purpose. General rules are about all that can be put on paper, and they are hardly worth while, for every individual shipper must work out his own system of producing quality in the kind of fruits or produce he has for sale, and if he has not the right kind no system will save him, for he is up against a hard proposition to make people buy even the best goods when they do not want them.

Study the needs and wants of your markets and your trade and strive to supply them. Be intelligent, be honest, work hard and you will prosper, for these are the prerequisites of quality in what you grow and ship.

By all means remember that it is not how much, but how good that gets the best returns. There will always be an oversupply of the inferior grades of fruits and produce. Let others grow and ship the inferior kind; you cannot afford to be put down with that class of growers and shippers if you are wide enough awake to get this book and read these pages and ponder over the subject as all sensible growers and shippers should.

There is no monopoly in quality as there is no monopoly in ideas. If every grower and shipper would think constantly about how to im-

prove the quality of what he grows and ships his net earnings would be increased considerably in the run of a lifetime, and if he should discover some new plan to get better quality and should build up a brand or a mark as a badge of honor for his products as he might easily do, he would leave his heirs a priceless heritage which would yield them a handsome revenue so long as they kept up the good quality in the same line of goods.

Superior quality can only come from close attention to detail, but by thinking out carefully a proper system of growing, harvesting and packing I believe it is much more easily secured than many people seem to believe.

## CHAPTER X

### PACKAGES

Primarily all packages are intended for protection. In handling fruits and produce it is essential that more or less protection be given to different articles, and usually the package is relied upon to provide this protection.

But the theory of a package involves more than mere protection; it is also a means of attracting or repelling trade. One is often induced to buy an article of fruit or produce because it is put up in artistic fashion in an attractive package.

The style of display has a far reaching influence in the successful handling of fruits and produce, and no one can convince the experienced dealer or shipper that this is not true.

No phase of the produce business is more slow to change than that of packages and the reason is no doubt to be found in the convenience, safety and satisfaction of using established sizes, styles and measures which have been bought and sold among the trade "since the mind of man runneth not to the contrary."

The ability to originate a new or improved package is a gift that few men in the trade possess. The produce business is one where customs and styles change slowly, just as styles and customs are adhered to generation after generation among oriental peoples. Therefore, the kind of package one becomes used to one usually prefers to continue using until something better is discovered and brought into general use, and nearly everyone prefers that others always do the experimenting with a new style or kind of package.

To be desirable a package must be as light as is consistent with the necessary strength to make it substantial for whatever purpose it is intended. Compactness and convenience in handling are also desirable features. But unfortunately, all packages we find used in handling fruits and produce do not seem to have been selected with this aim in view.

Some hulks and frames that come on the various markets appear to have been made in prehistoric times, and were never intended for handling more or less fragile and delicate articles such as most fruits, vegetables, etc.

Packages! They are without number and if one or two of every style, size, shape and color could be brought together under one roof it would be a sight worth travelling miles to see, and would no doubt be worth an admission fee of a dollar from everyone in the trade who devotes even a passing thought to the improvement of trade conditions.

There are barrels, boxes, baskets, hampers, crates, cases, coops, kegs, tubs, drums, cartons, buckets, bags and so on ad infinitum in the scheme of packages and coverings used in handling the thousand and one different commodities in the realm of fruits and produce.

Since many kinds of wood fulfill the two essentials of being light, and at the same time strong, it is quite natural that wood is largely used in the making of packages especially where a heavy or bulky commodity is to be handled. Other things being equal barrels, boxes and crates are given preference in most instances for outside packages as they are more easily handled than other kinds. But some articles can be bought and sold to best advantage in baskets while other kinds require coops, cases, etc.

However, there is room for great improvement in the scheme of packages now in use and I shall be surprised if some sweeping reforms are not made in the future with respect to certain packages at least. The high prices prevailing for lumber and the growing scarcity of timber make one pause and wonder what changes will have to be made. Already there is often great difficulty in getting orders filled for certain kinds of packages, and every year there seems to be more and more trouble to supply the trade with such packages as are needed. Here is a field for inventive talent and some fellow who may have the disposition and the ability can cover himself with immortal glory, as well as make a fortune, by working out a scheme for a package that may be used for a number of articles and perhaps universally if varied slightly in its make-up.

I submit that it is not a visionary idea to predict a new scheme in packages for most kinds of produce, and we may be forced to work out some new plan to solve the aggravating problem that is becoming more acute as time goes on with an ever increasing volume of business and less package material for use in supplying the needs of the trade. I am sure I have no suggestion to offer with respect to inventing a new universal package, but I mention the fact in all candor that there is a field in the realm of packages as yet unexplored.

From time to time there has been a serious shortage in egg cases and egg case material and it is doubtful if the demand will ever be steadily supplied so long as the white wood veneer cases are used. The paper case is still in the experimental stage and if it proves to be a success there may be the same difficulty in procuring paper material before many years that we now find in securing enough wood to make veneer cases. On the other hand barrels and cooperage stock are no longer plentiful and prices will never be lower, say the men handling that line of goods. Box shooks are often almost as good as gold if they can be had. Numbers of package factories are unable to take proper care of their trade, especially when there is an extra demand for a few weeks.

I have no disposition to grow pessimistic on this or any other subject, but it seems clear that it is high time the fruit and produce trade is doing some serious thinking and planning, some concerted action to provide against trouble in the future from a shortage in packages that will work a serious hardship on the country at large if no remedy is provided beforehand. One thing is certain and that is the necessary packages must be had somehow. If enough wood cannot be obtained a substitute must be found in some way.

The federal government is taking steps to preserve our scant remnants of forests that may have escaped the ravages of the lumberman's axe, and to restore as far as possible the primitive woods that have been ruthlessly cut out all over the continent. But the best results to be expected from even heroic efforts by our Washington government are a mere bagatelle compared with the growing needs of the country. From whatever angle the problem is looked at it assumes an ugly aspect. Some people, I know, will be so smart as to suggest that I am crossing bridges before I reach them by talking on this subject as I am, but such people lose sight of the fact that only the foolish fail to plan and provide for the future.

He is blind to facts who fails to see that the package problem is not one of the least that looms up on the produce horizon. It may be a few years reaching us but I feel it my duty to set up a warning here and fly the danger signal as I scan the approaching storm. I cannot ward off the winds but I can possibly warn the trade of their approach. Pardon me, I had not intended to convey the idea that I am a prophet or even a weather man, for I am not the original discoverer of the "package problem" of the future. Level headed people have discussed the matter for several years and the subject has been one that has made conservative men worry before I had even given it a serious thought or discovered there is such a problem.



The cheapness of a package is also one of the essential tests to which it must be subjected before it can be passed upon as being desirable. The cheap package, however, is not necessarily the best, for it may be a dear proposition although cheap. The best package is generally the cheapest in the long run.

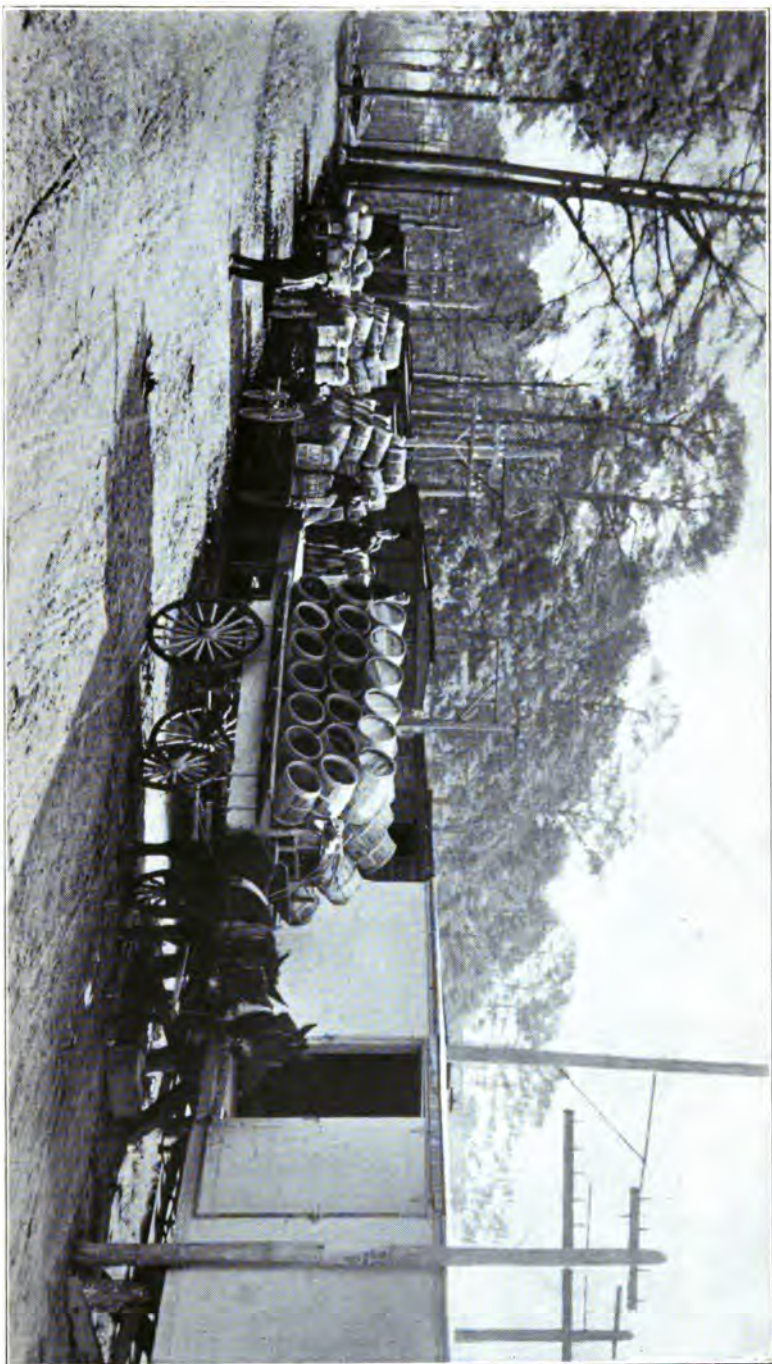
What constitutes the best package is, of course, subject to various interpretation, but ordinarily the best package is the one that is best calculated to protect goods in which they are shipped and at the same time permit them to be best displayed in order to bring their full market value when put on sale. A fine picture deserves a fine frame; so does good fruit or produce deserve a good package, for the package is to the latter what the frame is to the former.

Specific rules are not easily formulated and there are so many exceptions for different commodities in different localities that it is next kin to useless for one to go into the various details calling attention to good or bad points of certain kinds and styles of packages. However, I cannot refrain from saying that the sooner some packages are relegated to the scrap heap the better for the trade generally. The four basket crate with slanting sides for peaches is a bad idea and its use ought to be discarded. The six basket carrier or even the bushel or half bushel basket is preferable. Again, the second hand egg case is a nuisance unless these cases are properly bound with iron straps so as to prevent loss from breakage.

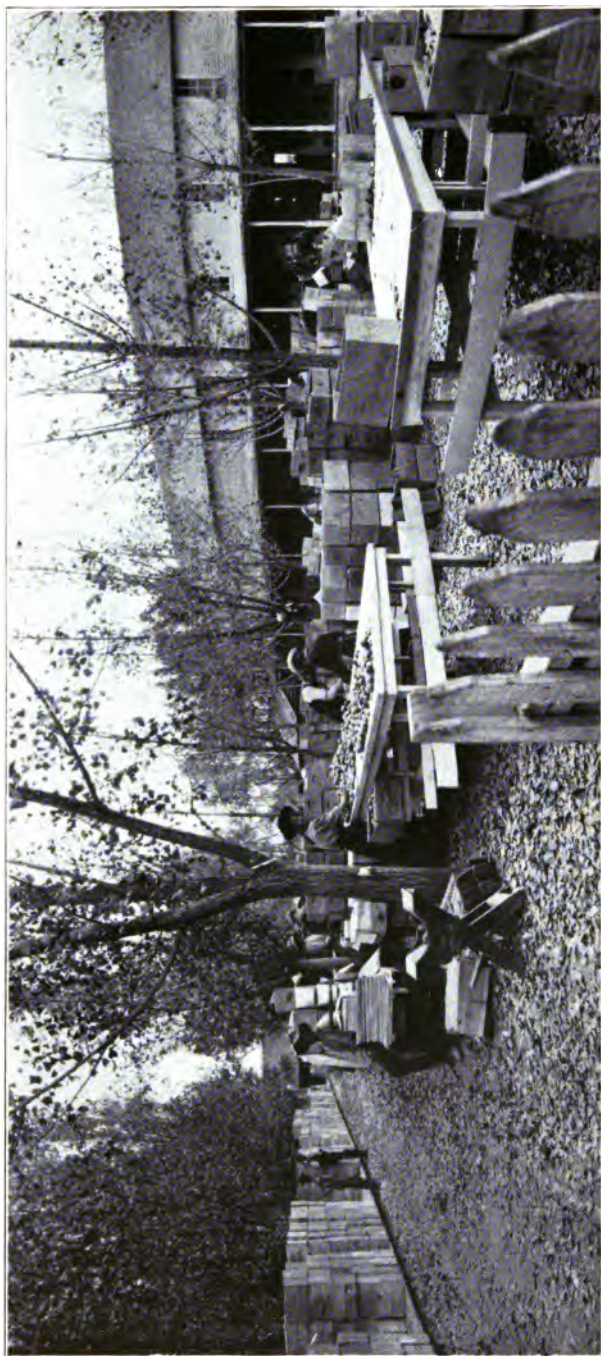
Shipping packing stock or roll butter in anything but good parchment lined, clean barrels is a costly mistake. It is downright cruel as well as bad judgment to crowd live fowls into a small coop that was never constructed with a view to being comfortable for the birds it is made to hold. Some miserable traps for shipping poultry should be discarded by passing some stringent laws if necessary or enforcing existing laws.

Many shippers are too careless in using packages that are flimsy and are easily broken up or damaged by rough handling. Untold wealth is lost every year through bad judgment in selecting packages for shipping early southern fruits and vegetables from the south to northern markets. Generally speaking all these packages should be stronger. They probably would cost a bit more to make and for transportation, but there would be a great saving from rough handling which often ruins packages and contents.

Above all things there should be no "snide" packages. If a package is called a bushel box, or a peck basket or a three bushel barrel it should be true to specifications. Dishonesty in packages as in other things, is unwise and will sooner or later make trouble.



FEBRUARY SHIPPING SCENE AT NORFOLK, VIRGINIA—WAGONS AT THE LEFT  
ARE LADEN WITH SPINACH



PACKING FRUIT IN COLORADO

Unfortunately our whole system of packages, like our system of weights and measures, is characterized mainly for its lack of uniformity. There can be no doubt that a federal law fixing uniform weights and measures would be a great aid in bringing about needed reforms in all kinds of packages.

Uniform packages insofar as possible are very much to be desired from every point of view, and while there are great difficulties to be overcome in regulating what the entire country shall use, at the same time a great many progressive growers and shippers are coming to see where the advantage lies. Pretty nearly all dealers are a unit in wishing for honest, uniform measures.

But it is unlikely we shall get much nearer the ideal state of uniform packages so long as we have a majority of growers who seemingly want to try deluding others, and are in fact, deluding themselves. Snide packages constitute an excellent boomerang,—they are designed to catch someone and instead whip back to the one who starts them, for there is no question they are more expensive to the grower than to anyone else.

Of late years we have seen a noticeable drift in the direction of putting up different kinds of fruits and produce in small enough units to be passed through wholesaler, jobber and retailer to the consumer without re-handling, and there is a lot of good sense in the plan.

Usually a needless waste comes from handling and repacking. Butter that is put up in pound prints at the creamery, California grapes in small baskets the consumer can take away in handy fashion, eggs in cartons from the country shipper, apples in small packages, melons in carriers, all help to stimulate trade as well as prevent needless waste.

There are numerous little ideas in the field of packages that are yet to be discovered and made use of. As we go on and the need becomes more apparent for these improvements we shall no doubt have some surprises. The writer is firmly convinced we have much to learn before we can claim perfection in the adaptation or treatment of ideas in our common packages, and he hopes to see more interest shown in the general improvement of packages within the next few years.

Possibly there is greater need for a good, all around bushel crate for harvesting, shipping and storing various fruits and vegetables than can be said of any other one kind of package. Such a package in a bushel crate has been worked out by Professor Ballou of the Ohio Experiment Station, and which he describes as follows:

“The desirable features of a crate for holding or storing potatoes, apples or other produce are lightness, strength, compactness and convenience in handling. If these points be combined in a style or form of

package that will enable us to store them away economically when empty—in the least possible space—we have pretty nearly the ideal crate. Personally I do not care for a “folding” crate. The number of parts and the cost of manufacturing are increased, and one is likely to find himself unwittingly infringing on some one’s “patent.” Besides, the folding feature is of no great advantage to the busy man, who has use for the crates nearly the whole year round.

“A style of crates that anyone can build, and which may be stored away, three crates in the space of two, ought to be good enough for the most exacting. We are using such crates at the experiment station, and they give excellent service and satisfaction. They hold a full, rounded bushel, level full, and permit of a cover being nailed on, or of being racked up, one upon another, without crushing or bruising the contents. The cubic contents of such crates, dimensions for making which are given below, are about 2,700 cubic inches, while 2,688 cubic inches constitute a legal or U. S. rounded bushel.

“The crates are made entirely of light strips of wood—no solid ends, sides or bottoms being used. Material, exact measure: Uprights or corner posts—length,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches, width 2 inches; thickness,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Ends,  $18\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 2 by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch. Sides and bottom,  $16\frac{7}{8}$  inches by 2 by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch.

This makes a crate  $16\frac{7}{8}$  inches long,  $18\frac{7}{8}$  inches wide and  $12\frac{3}{8}$  inches high, outside measure, and the pieces are easily assembled. These crates can be “nested”—three in the space of two.”

## CHAPTER XI

### GRADING AND PACKING

No subject before the produce public is more important than that of promoting the cause of better grading and packing of fruits and vegetables, and in fact, all kinds of produce articles down to roots, junk, bottles, bones and rags, if I may be permitted to include some of the latter within legitimate produce lines.

In foregoing chapters intimations have been already given of the necessity of making the best appearances with produce when it goes to market to be sold. Right here I want to say candidly that I regard proper grading and packing fully fifty per cent of the marketing end of the produce deal, at least, so far as the grower and shipper are concerned.

The subject is one that has already received much attention all over the country and is destined to be heard of more and more as all branches of the trade are fully awakened to the vital importance of the subject.

Grading and packing is at once a science and an art. The field can never be exhausted as there are infinite possibilities for improvement in the preparation of nearly every commodity for marketing. In a large measure the size, style and kind of package to be used for a given article places limitations on the grading and packing. Certain arbitrary changes may be forced from time to time in packing on account of scarcity in some kinds of packages. But there is room for expert knowledge and careful study to make the best of whatever materials are to be had. Scarcity of package materials may cause far reaching changes in the present methods of putting up fruits, etc. Therefore, the question of packages is intimately related to the matter of grading and packing.

However that may be we shall always see a premium paid for the best pack, and there is great incentive for extra efforts to grade more carefully and pack better all along the line. It is no longer a question of choice but a matter of necessity for associations and individuals to emphasize correct, up-to-date grading and packing if they are to reap the full meas-



ure of success so much desired by all. Instances have already been cited to show what results are obtained by apple growers in the northwest by going to extra pains in putting out the best kind of fruit.

Examples could be multiplied from other sections covering other articles, but the facts are being brought home to the careless grower every day and the cold logic of dollars and cents are the mute witnesses that bear effective testimony that the right kind of grading and packing is worth while and about the only kind that is worth while. There is little or no sentiment in the dollar, and produce that sells for the most money must have some qualifications not found in other kinds that bring less money. Isn't this perfectly clear?

Perhaps no better example of what can be accomplished by proper grading and packing is to be found than that of cantaloupes. A few years ago the possibilities in handling these melons were hardly dreamed of by the trade at large. The great distance that California, Arizona and Colorado melons had to be shipped to market in the larger cities and the high transportation charges to be figured on made it necessary to handle only good stock. This caused a close grade for quality, and dictated a pack that would allow the melons to go a long distance and reach destination in merchantable shape. Good prices were easily obtained for the right kind of stock and the quality was maintained which made a reputation for the cantaloupe, and which has been the foundation for several considerable fortunes. The handling of cantaloupes has now become a well developed specialty that engages some of the best talent in the trade, and those who were disposed to sneer at these gems when the field was being developed are now compelled to take off their hats to the lasting monument to correct grading and packing. Without the rigid grading system used in marketing these melons the big industry would have been utterly impossible.

The palm must be yielded to the far west for the earliest and best grading and packing of produce after scientific and artistic methods. In fact, people in coast territory originated many of the styles and ideas now in vogue, and have displayed good judgment in most of their ideas.

While there are some modifications and improvements the original bases and schemes are still about the same. The system of sizes of citrus fruits in boxes of certain dimensions is about the most clever device imaginable, and has been reduced to such mathematical precision that it is difficult to suggest further improvements. In these packages there is uniformity, neatness and evidence of quality throughout that always secures favorable consideration among the trade and also from the great consuming public which gives rise to an annual traffic of 25,000 to 30,-

000 cars which amounts to a sum of money that is colossal for the fruit business, which the average person out of the trade is too apt to think is a kind of corner peanut stand proposition.

I might add that most deciduous fruits from the far west are generally handled with the same painstaking care as applies to citrus fruits. Plums, grapes, cherries, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, etc., are graded closely and are nearly always what the grade implies, and so far as quality goes the fruit is grown as good as the soil, the climate and expert attention will produce.

No doubt the long season of equable temperature in the far west has much to do with the uniform fruit to be found there, for it is generally uniform in size, color, taste, carrying quality, etc. The dry climate of Colorado is a great advantage in growing peaches that can be kept for a much longer time than those peaches grown where rainfall is irregular and often excessive at the wrong time for getting best results in the quality of fruit. And what is true of peaches is also true of other fruits of nearly all kinds grown in the inter-mountain country.

But where there are not such advantages in the way of climatic conditions as are found in the far west, and where fruit growing is a less certain business, there is all the more argument in favor of careful attention to the subject of grading and packing. It should not require a genius to realize that proper grading only means getting together all fruit of uniform quality, color and size, and anyone of a little experience who has two eyes and who is honest should be able to throw out the inferior fruit from what he ships if he is unable to evolve a perfect system of points upon which to base classes or grades. Packing usually proceeds after fixed styles that vary widely for different articles. However, a package may conform to regular styles and still be dishonest.

The fact that many Eastern apple growers have been known of old to put fruit about like this

O      O      O      O      O      O      O      O      O      O  
on top of their barrels, and at the bottom in order to face off the pack-  
age, and to fill in between with stock about like this

o      o      o      o      o

has caused some folks to suppose the grower who follows such practices is more interested in catching a sucker in some apple buyer than he is in making his pack a good advertisement for himself and a money maker for his purchaser.

I regret to say there are too many cases where growers aim to deceive by their pack; to lie by action if not by word, and secure good American money with no fly specks on it for stock worth about half what is paid



for it if judged by proper standards of grading and packing which should rest on common, everyday honesty. Such tactics have caused "farmers' pack" to come to have a negative meaning among dealers.

If growers and shippers generally would stop to think that in the end it is pennywise and pound foolish to try these tactics they would all abandon such business and try to get on a correct system that would yield them just as much, if not more money, by getting the premium on quality and not by trying to flim-flam somebody with a faulty, dishonest pack. In other words, they should look for revenue from a qualitative and not from a quantitative standpoint. The fact that the poor fruit in a package usually sells it instead of the good fruit is the main thing to remember about the importance of offering good stock only.

Considerable has been said about the Fruit Marks act which is now in operation all over the Dominion of Canada, and many people in the trade throughout the states are of the opinion that some such law should be put into operation in the United States.

It would no doubt be a capital plan to require so far as possible every fruit and vegetable grower and shipper to have a stamp bearing his name or registered number which should be put on every package he sells or sends on the market to be sold, and have certain grades or classes and require every grower or shipper to declare by means of a mark on the package, or otherwise, just what is the quality of the contents of the package and what quantity it contains.

A rigid federal regulation may be necessary to make some tricky growers and shippers quit using "snide" measures, and abandon the disgraceful practice of putting rubbish in the bottom or middle of a package and a covering of good stock on top, bottom or outside, so as to mislead people in and out of the trade who have become sick and tired of such trickery and dishonesty.

In view of the sweeping reforms we have seen in federal and state laws the last few years it need cause little surprise if some general law of this kind is passed before many years, for the matter has been agitated and there are hundreds and hundreds of honest growers and shippers who want to see the morals of the trade upheld and elevated, and who would support heartily such a measure and would see that it is properly enforced if passed by Congress or uniformly by the various states. No single state or collection of states less than the whole union can deal effectively with such legislation, for the produce business is so largely interstate traffic that state laws alone would be of little avail to accomplish the necessary ends unless uniform action is to be had similar to the pure food laws.

No doubt much of the unsatisfactory packing found in all lines of fruits and produce arises from sheer ignorance—honest ignorance—I might say, for there are many growers who seem to have a very slight conception of what correct grading and packing means.

For such there should be ample instruction. But for those who persist in questionable practices some penalty should be provided and enforced. Those who raise and ship any kind of produce should make a close study of the best plan for putting up goods in attractive shape, and what packages and what grades are wanted in various markets and for the different classes of buyers. Most dealers will be glad to give information and help shippers to make improvements in their packs and grades, since dealers have a joint interest with growers and shippers in such matters. Much progress has already been secured in this way, especially in new producing sections.

One great difficulty in packing has been that too much haste is made to get shipments ready, and stuff is often thrown about and crammed into the packages the quickest way possible. This is all wrong. It is usually better that a shipment be delayed than have it go forward in a slipshod fashion that will ruin the prospect of its selling for best available prices. Transportation costs just as much for poor stuff as for the best; therefore, it is making money to take a little more time and ship better stuff by fixing a better pack.

I am fully alive to the fact that it is not always possible to grade closely all kinds of produce at initial points, for proper facilities cannot always be had for grading such a commodity as eggs, and perhaps a few others. But I submit that as a general proposition the trade would make, or better save, hundreds of thousands of dollars every season by exercising more care in grading and packing from the first places where all kinds of produce originate in commercial quantities. If only the better class of stock is shipped and the rubbish is left behind there would be a great sum saved in transportation that is annually paid out for shipments that go in whole or in part to the dump after reaching destination.

By all means the question of proper grading should be studied carefully by every shipper. New ideas will suggest themselves from time to time and much money can be made by strenuous thinking on new and better plans for grades and packs.

## CHAPTER XII

### WHERE IS YOUR MARKET?

In raising the question indicated by the caption of this chapter I hope it will be clearly understood that I have in mind principally the matter of net results, for no market is worth while unless it makes a profit for a shipper not so much on one shipment, but for a season, as we must bear in mind it is the average that must be figured on to reach a fair idea of profits or losses.

Although distance is easily a factor that must always be taken into consideration in deciding what is your best market it is by no means true that distance is the bar it used to be in past years when the stage coach was in operation, or even since railroads and steamship lines have been brought to a state of semi-perfection when the continent can be crossed in three or four days, and when the subtle electric flash goes from coast to coast in a breath.

It has been truly said modern inventions have well nigh annihilated time and space. The effect is quite evident in handling fruits and produce when it is not infrequent in some of the larger markets to see shipments offered for sale alongside one another from nearly every state in the union, and perhaps half a dozen foreign countries.

Conditions nowadays make it possible almost to do miracles in the way of handling all kinds of produce. Many cars of various commodities are loaded every day and set rolling with no particular destination in view. Sometimes they may have to be held up at a junction point or even at a terminal for orders, but usually there are diversion orders given the railroad companies on cars billed to "our order," and it is truly marvelous with what despatch these diversions can be handled. It is not with a view to throwing any bouquet at the transportation lines that I refer to these "miracles of shipping," for I shall not agree that the semi-perfect condition of transportation is not due as largely to the business men of the country as to the transportation people who are themselves

supposed to be business men, but who are often only snobs and petty autocrats so far as the law allows or conditions justify.

It cannot be successfully refuted that many conveniences and improvements in transportation have been put in or made at the insistent demands of the business public. And these are some of the very things for which the transportation people try to take the most credit; it occurs to me that the man who is good only when under duress is entitled to few rewards for his piety.

Therefore, the shipping facilities today for which the transportation people are not wholly responsible, make distance cut comparatively little figure in the produce business. This is especially true of high priced stuff.

It would seem incredible that freezers of strawberries from Florida could be shipped by express at an exorbitant rate and move to northern markets at a profit. To speak of shipping car lots of cantaloupes across the continent by express would have been quite enough to disconcert a mollycoddle in the produce business some years ago. But this very thing is done every season, thus finding a market at a great distance, but no doubt the logical market.

Australian butter has to move quite half way around the globe to reach the United States, yet when conditions are right it is no trick at all to handle the deal, as it matters little whether we ship by land or water so long as we reach the market we should and at the right time.

Now every dealer believes or should believe that he has the "best" market in the country. The reason I say he should believe his market is the best is also the chief reason he has for declaring his house is the "best,"—indeed, it is the most plausible excuse one can have for being in business, and once a fellow is in the deal, planted firmly on this conviction with reasonable capital and tolerable morals, he may be a bad proposition as a competitor even for the big houses to tackle, although the aforesaid inflated peewee may reside at some "jay town" that hardly has its name in the geography and not even have a Carnegie library. It is all in the system,—this produce game. The commodity being handled has a wide influence on the system, it is true, but given the right commodity into the hands of the right man and it is a combination hard to beat. Things happen ever so often that seem astounding.

Markets can be used that look to be clear out of bounds. The fellow who knows every detail of his line can do wonders with it, or rather make it do wonders, for his hand need hardly be seen once his system gets under way.

It is especially true of the car lot shipments that they can go almost

anywhere. Staples like apples, potatoes, onions, cabbage, cranberries, poultry, butter, eggs, cheese, etc. can be placed in any one of a hundred different markets when conditions are favorable. Generally such goods are handled on a price f.o.b., or else the transportation charges are added and a delivered price is made, with draft attached to bill of lading.

It is with the small shipments that there is most room for worry about where the right market is. Although transportation does not prevent shipping long distances when conditions are right, yet the high transportation charges are much higher still on less than car lot shipments, and unless there is some plan to combine shipments of different shippers and get the reduced car lot rate, the charges often preclude reaching markets where the rate is above a certain figure which is the limit the article will stand without selling for "charges" at destination, or else lose money in some other way.

In order to determine where your market is you must study all the markets. Here is where the association has very great advantage over the individual shipper, for the association composed of fifty or a hundred shippers can have one man cover the entire situation, and even if all wires and other expenses are paid for every day by the association, the information obtained is nominal in cost when prorated among the whole membership. And to be able to ship intelligently such information must be had daily, almost hourly, to know which are the proper markets to use.

But the little shipper who is stuck off in a cross roads town, who belongs to no association and has no opportunity to co-operate with others has to knit his brow to find his best outlet, and like many others, he probably allows someone who has not his best interest at heart to do his thinking for him. It is well for the shipper to rely on his commission man if he is getting proper treatment, but if the shipper finds some other market that yields him better returns, it takes something more than claims of the "best market" to hold him from making a quick change.

But it is dangerous for shippers to conclude too quickly they have struck it rich when they send one or two shipments to a house in a new market, for there can be no telling what the next few shipments will do as we have already seen why the first returns are often padded out for the purpose of securing heavier shipments later, which are made to stand the loss of the bait sent along with the first returns. It is the average of the season and not a single shipment that makes a market or a house worth while. Lots of shippers have trouble getting a correct view of this proposition.

For example: A shipment of five barrels of apples may sell for \$2,



OLD FRENCH MARKET, NEW ORLEANS, LA.





A TYPICAL CROWD OF FRUIT BUYERS INSPECTING LINES OF FRUITS TO BE SOLD THROUGH  
A NEW YORK AUCTION

\$1.75, \$1.50, \$1.25 and \$1 which is only \$1.50 per barrel for them all. If two barrels did sell over the average price, there were enough sold at and under the average to cut it down to a figure where some other market might have better had the shipment.

This average, of course, applies to only one sale. The season's average is far more intricate and important. We have all seen prices slowly drop from early in the season to the close when it almost takes a spy glass to see a profit at the wind up. Some cases where houses start in low they keep getting about the same prices, and when they wind up their shippers have a better average price than others who began the game with a rainbow account of sales and a hand painted check. By no means can the result of one or two shipments be conclusive evidence as to the goodness or the badness of a market, nor can the first sales be taken as a criterion for what will happen in the future. It stands to reason, of course, that when one shipment brings a good price, the next one will also likely produce the same result. But this is one of the illusions that the produce crook uses to coin money, and there is ample proof that the scheme has been successful again and again when operated properly.

One important thing in selecting a market is to connect with a good house. How best to do this I shall take up for later treatment. But it is a fact that a good house in a bad market is better than a bad house in a good market so far as the shipper is concerned.

Generally speaking a good distributing point whether in a large or a small town is a good market for handling a wholesale or jobbing business. But the larger cities are naturally better centers for consuming purposes. If labor conditions are good and people are prosperous it is next kin to impossible for the larger markets to be over loaded more than a few days at any one time with choice produce.

Some shippers who have made a superficial survey of conditions and people take the position that their market is at their shipping stations and they will sell for cash only and must have the money or a bank guarantee that the consignee will protect shipper's draft, which is equivalent to cash. After all, the question of selling or consigning is a broad one and deserves treatment more fully in a separate chapter. But this much can be said: there are times when it is best to use both systems if used intelligently. Some shipments no doubt show best returns on a legitimate consignment basis.

No set of rules can be put down on paper to determine what market is best for this or that commodity, or when it is best to sell or consign. Conditions may change over night that make a good market today a bad



one for tomorrow and vice versa. It requires careful study to keep up with the game, and no one is so wise as to be absolutely sure what will turn up tomorrow.

But if one is fairly intelligent he can easily get a line on things, and with a little experience can draw correct conclusions quickly,—can cash his judgment for so much bullion when he hits things right. Still no one learns all the ropes in a life time and some men who have grown gray headed in the business have come to find out some things late in life that almost make them weep to realize what they have lost for not knowing them sooner.

Information is one of the prime essentials in arriving at what markets it is best to use. Your best market may, therefore, be a thousand miles away or it may be at your own packing shed, or in your orchard or on track at your station.

Let me repeat: the question can hardly be studied too thoroughly, for it means a substantial reward for him that knows that he knows what he is doing when he makes a shipment. Those who make a practice of shooting into the dark with a blunderbuss, as it were, by consigning to Tom, Dick and Harry in any and every market will find enough trouble after shipping if they are not disposed to give themselves a little trouble to be sure of their ground before shipping indiscriminately. Again, the fellow who refuses to consign and sits down waiting for buyers may lose a golden opportunity by so doing.

Under all circumstances, your best market is the one that yields the best average profit. But it often requires some higher mathematics to know anything definite about various markets until you have tried them out.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SELL OR CONSIGN?

Sentiment among growers and shippers appears to be hopelessly divided on the question whether it is best to sell or consign and to set up any certain arbitrary rule to follow is a difficult if not an impossible task.

There are extremists on this subject as is true of nearly every similar question that has agitated the mind of man from the earliest times. But the question is still unsettled and it will perhaps continue to rest in that state indefinitely, for its proper solution depends on so many other problems that no one can tell how the matter will be disposed of or what its ultimate outcome will be.

It is true that many growers have become prejudiced on this subject and have apparently allowed their prejudice to run away with their judgment to the detriment of their best interests. I suppose it is nobody's business when an association or an individual shipper makes a hard and fast rule to sell everything for cash f. o. b. or have a bank guarantee before shipping, or else let their fruit, vegetables, etc. rot in the fields or orchards. But it must be recognized as bad judgment to adopt such business policy which shows plainly the lack of confidence in all mankind which usually results from misunderstandings or downright ignorance.

I am fully aware of the fact that many commission men have abused the confidence of growers and shippers and I have already said enough on this subject to indicate clearly what I think of the dishonest element among commission men, and I hope I have also stated clearly my views with respect to the dishonest element among shippers and associations. But it is wrong to draw any conclusion about the whole trade over the country, or about the merits or demerits of selling or consigning simply because a few isolated cases are taken and held up as frightful examples when there are thousands of cases that might be cited to prove the contrary is true.

Transactions in the aggregate must be looked at to form a sensible

opinion about the produce business just as it is necessary to perform a number of experiments or prove a number of facts to establish a universal law or to arrive at a general truth, whether this truth relates to business, theology, mathematics, physics or what not.

From a careful observation extending over a period of several years I must say that I have no preference whatever for one system of handling produce as against the other. There are occasions now and then when there is no reasonable doubt but it is preferable both to the grower, shipper and dealer to use the consignment basis in handling shipments of fruits and produce, while there are other occasions when it is no doubt best even from the dealer's standpoint to buy outright.

When I speak of consigning I trust I will not be misunderstood, for I refer only to the responsible, respectable element that receives and sells shipments for the account of others, and I also refer to the individual shipper and to the associations that take a reasonable amount of care in putting up stock and in using good judgment in its distribution.

The receivers in the different markets are not altogether responsible for profits or losses from handling consignments, and while the average shipper or grower appears not to understand this fact, he would be less liable to find fault with the commission system when part of the fault so often lies with him more than it does with the man he may have have selected to represent him, or the market to which he ships.

On behalf of the commission men I desire to say emphatically that there are hundreds of them in many markets who are entitled to the fullest confidence of growers, shippers and associations,—men who put in long hours of work for small pay considering the rewards other lines of business yield for similar service. As a general proposition I think it will be much better for everybody concerned if the commission men were allowed more money for their services as marketing agents. But I shall take up this matter for later treatment and prefer to waive further comment for the present.

After all, the matter of selling or consigning is one that depends upon conditions that vary with the seasons and with different commodities. Whichever system yields the best profit is undoubtedly the best one to use. Some commodities have to be handled now and then on a consignment basis because buyers cannot be found readily at shipping points. In such instances it is rather unreasonable to look for big profits when all markets are well supplied. Again, when markets are in good condition and if the grower or association has a suitable connection they can get the advantage of higher prices by consigning, whereas if they sell upon the f. o. b. plan they can rest assured that the buyer has figured in



PEACH MARKET AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., WHERE 60,000 BU. DAILY HAVE BEEN SOLD



A FLORIDA CELERY FIELD SHOWING BLEACHING PROCESS

transportation charges, has allowed for a depreciation in quality and has also figured his profit, which would necessarily be a fairly good one to warrant his investment. But in such cases where it is necessary to raise money immediately from the sale of produce, and a reasonable track offer can be secured it is no doubt the proper thing to sell if a fair price is paid.

A typical case showing what can be done in handling some lines almost exclusively on a consignment basis is found in one of the largest associations in the southwest whose officials say unhesitatingly that their best results are secured from the consignment system. Still other lines report best results from sales made f. o. b. or in transit. But the season, market conditions and connections have a great deal to do with the success or failure of either plan.

An instance showing how growers are sometimes blinded by prejudice and sometimes make losses for themselves is brought out clearly in an association of strawberry shippers in a southern section who decided a year or two ago that they would sell everything f. o. b. on a strictly cash basis.

But the buyers did not come as had been expected. A few lots of berries, whose quality was poor as usual, were sold to the first buyers, and as might be expected because of the unsatisfactory quality the buyers either lost money or broke even on their investment. They were indifferent about taking more stock. Yet the growers insisted on sticking to their original plan and had several extra refrigerator cars put on a spur track and loaded with berries of better quality; they shot out wires right and left to jobbers and dealers, but there were no responses at the prices asked, and the few buyers' representatives who had been on the ground had received instructions to proceed elsewhere; the loaded cars were left on track unsold. The owners of these berries had made no preparation to consign their shipments and the fruit was left to rot, and quite a lot of it was actually dumped at the original loading station. Some of the growers felt disposed to modify their rule and prepared to send a few shipments forward to good firms in different markets to be handled for their account. But the express company refused to furnish them with any more cars, for their equipment was badly needed at other points from which shipments were being made daily and where there was no risk about having cars loaded and left on track several days only to have their contents dumped, and consequently bring no revenue to the owners of the equipment. Further losses were sustained among the growers, and the express company, together with the commission men, were accused of nearly every sin in the decalogue. The season wound up disastrously and instead of realizing even a small profit

on the entire crop, most of the berries grown in this immediate locality went to waste, for it was only the local consumptive demand the growers had to depend upon.

They were literally committing business suicide when they tied themselves to a hard and fast rule against consigning, and before they could remedy their error and lay plans for connections the best part of their season was well over.

Although their berries might easily have been used in different markets at a fair price if proper connections had been selected in advance and the berries had been put through at the right time, it was discovered later that it takes more or less time to work up a satisfactory outlet even on the right kind of commission deal.

But there are some growers and associations who go on the theory that they will sell the best stock on track for cash and consign their rubbish, as they appear to believe they will realize nothing from their consignments anyway.

Unless the right connections are worked up and the proper confidence is placed in these connections it is best perhaps not to consign anything. But when conditions so dictate, and consignments are properly placed they should, and usually do, make money for the shipper.

During a season when supplies are abundant and buyers rarely show up at shipping points it is almost absolutely necessary to look for an outlet on a consignment basis. This has always been the case and probably always will be.

It is worthy of note that a large percentage of the world's food stuffs is handled on a commission basis at some stage of the game from producer to consumer, and I submit that a system which is of such long standing and such universal application must have some good points in its favor.

Naturally, the main difficulty on a consignment proposition is to get a square deal. Some shippers are so prejudiced and narrow minded that they incline to the opinion that there is no such person as an honest commission man. They appear to regard him somewhat like the child regards all stories when he comes to know about the fairies of which he has been accustomed to read in the picture books.

Many shippers have warped or extravagant notions about how fruits and produce are put through the great markets of the country, and some of them apparently have an idea that any kind of truck can be exchanged for its weight in gold or other precious metals, and that it is a simple thing to get rich if the proper police protection could be had to keep the commission men from robbing the shippers before they could get out of town if they were allowed to bring shipments in and sell them themselves.

If such growers and shippers could spend a little time in the large markets seeing with their own eyes what is daily taking place I have no doubt but they would revise their opinions about trade conditions generally, and I think most of them would be fair minded enough to agree that the commission men, jobbers, brokers, etc. as a class are no worse, if no better, than the average run of people.

That many sins must be answered for among receivers in the larger markets there can be no doubt, but I am confident many a firm has been accused of wrong doing when there was no reasonable grounds for accusation. On the other hand, there are many commission thieves who are not found out, but the same applies to any and every line of business as far as that goes. Let's not be so unfair as to condemn a system because it has a flaw or two here and there.

Now, the question may be reasonably asked: If there are some who are not found out how can one be sure he is in safe hands when making consignments?

The only answer that can be made is that there is no absolute assurance, although reasonable certainty can usually be had. It only requires a little investigation at a nominal expense nowadays to find out who is who. There are good firms and individual dealers all over the country. The various commercial agencies, banks, transportation companies, trade papers, etc., constitute a reasonable source of information which can usually be relied on in selecting commission merchants in different markets.

The question of the best market is frequently interwoven very closely with the question of consigning or selling, for both involve the matter of results as we have already seen. Those who are progressive enough to make a careful study and who are honest enough to admit the truth when it is found out, can evolve a proper solution of the question of selling or consigning, even if it only applies for one season, one week or one day. Those who are contracted or ignorant or who have little confidence in themselves or in their fellow men will hardly obtain satisfactory results from either system, and I suppose little comment so far as their relations go will be worth while.

In conclusion, I would say that those who find the consigning system the most profitable should stick to it. On the other hand, those who find f. o. b. sales productive of the best results should continue that method of marketing.

But I feel sure those who are alive to their best interests will not despise either system when properly worked, for the fault is not in the system so much as with the individual, sometimes at one or the other end of the line and, I regret to say, sometimes at both ends.



## CHAPTER XIV

### AUCTIONS

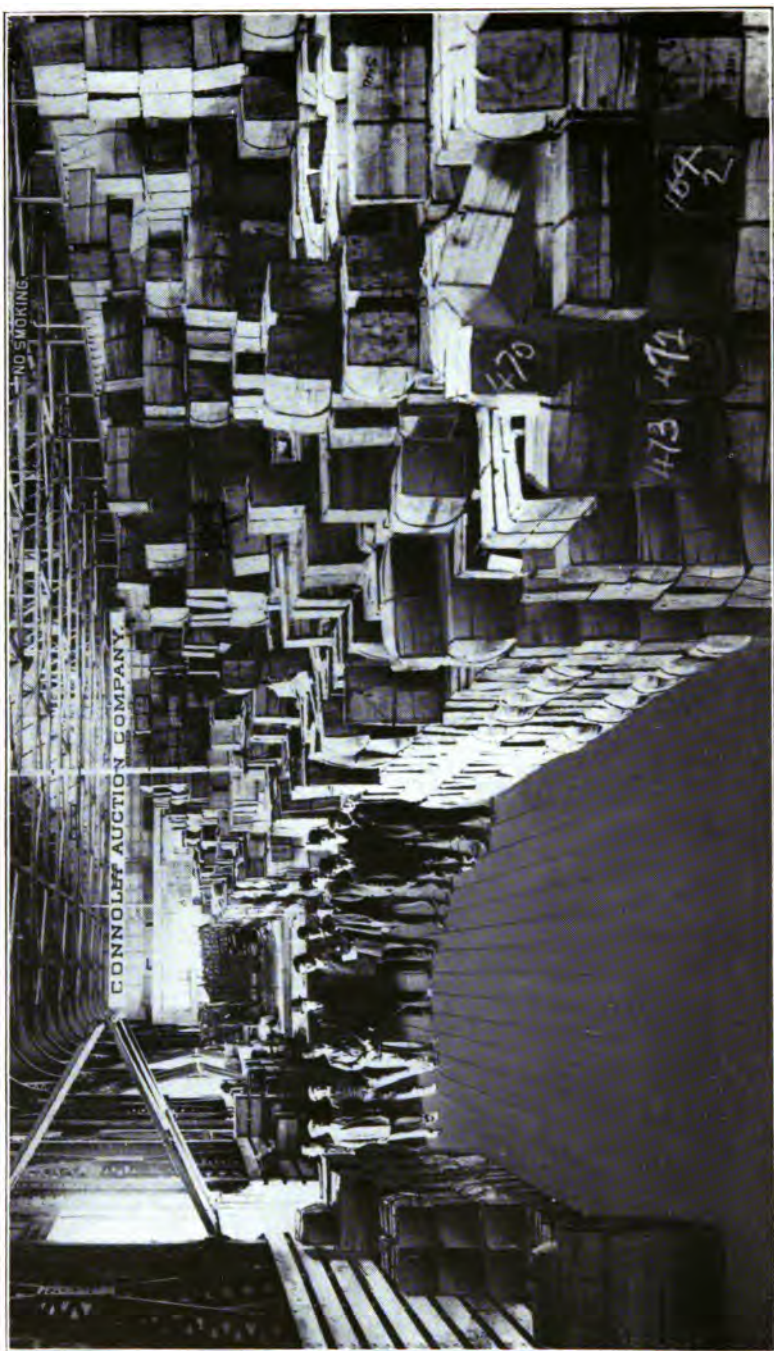
Owing to the fact that so many different kinds of fruits and vegetables are being sold at auction nowadays, it would not be out of place perhaps to have a few words with reference to this system of selling, and while I want it distinctly understood at the outset that I am not offering any arguments particularly in favor of the auction system or against it, I do think that some of the points in favor of the auction system of selling might well be included in this volume.

Practically all fruits and vegetables imported into this country in quantities are sold through different auctions, usually at the port of entry. This is particularly true with reference to Italian lemons, Spanish onions, and a large part of the bananas brought into the larger sea-ports every season, while quite a respectable portion of various other kinds of fruits and vegetables also find their way into the hands of the jobbing trade through the auction channel.

In the way of domestic fruits we have an enormous amount of deciduous fruits from the Pacific Coast which are sold through auctions in the various large markets, while quite a bit of citrus fruit from California and Florida is sold at auction in various large market centers every season. In Chicago, which is probably the largest distributing point in the country for deciduous fruits, the annual business now transacted runs from 3,000 to 4,000 cars, and it is amazing with what speed these sales are conducted. One of the leading Chicago auctioneers has a record of selling around 50 cars of deciduous fruits on one occasion in about two hours and a half. The same thing is taking place in a lesser degree in practically all the other large market centers with reference to deciduous fruits during the late spring, summer and fall seasons. Most people engaged in the handling of deciduous fruits are decidedly in favor of the auction system of selling, and they seem to have reached their conclusion from long experience in handling these shipments and getting



OPENING A SALE IN ROOMS OF ILLINOIS CENTRAL AUCTION, WEST FRUIT HOUSE, CHICAGO



AUCTION SCENE IN NEW YORK SHOWING LOT NUMBERS ON PACKAGES

them in the hands necessary to save time and expense in reaching the consumer.

Those who are partial to the auction system of selling point out that quick action is one of the chief arguments in its favor. Of this there can be little doubt, because it is easy to see where so many more buyers are congregated at an auction sale it is much easier to arrive at some price and effect sales with little or no delay.

Another feature pointed out with equal emphasis is that prices secured are always such as come near reflecting the actual value of the commodities being sold. Here again we must concede that there is something in the argument set forth, for the only way to establish an auction price is to put one bid against another. So long as no favoritism is shown by the auctioneer towards one buyer as compared with another, this fairness in the matter of reaching a price commensurate with existing market values must be conceded.

Again, it is pointed out that the cost of selling through the auction plan is usually reduced to a minimum, ranging generally two to four per cent where any considerable line of business is being handled. The fact that the auction people seem to find these commissions profitable goes without saying. On the other hand, it should be considered that they spend little or no money in getting their business and it generally happens they have an enormous line of stuff placed in their hands before they make the low rate of commission for selling.

Opinions vary widely as to the probable widest distribution afforded through the plan of auction selling as against private sale. Some people will argue until they are black in the face that the auction system absolutely secures the widest distribution possible, whereas there are others who apparently can advance just as plausible reasons to show that the private sale will secure a wider distribution than is possible through auction selling. Perhaps the commodity in question has a whole lot to do with which plan of selling is best for wide distribution as well as best prices. What may be true of one commodity may be quite different when it comes to some other so far as the method of selling and width of distribution are concerned.

In the matter of handling Italian lemons it is altogether probable that under any other system than having these lemons sold through auction and having orders wired to brokers to buy, there would be fewer lemons sold and, in all probability, at lower prices. When a cargo is scheduled to arrive the broker, who is on the ground and who is supposed to have a fair working knowledge of the quality of the fruit expected, can promptly advise his clients scattered all over the country and in little

or no time he is enabled to complete a transaction which would otherwise require a great deal of time and would bring the cost of the fruit so much higher to the consumer as to almost preclude anything like a general distribution throughout the country. And what applies to lemons may be said to apply also to other commodities among fruits and vegetables which we import in quantities.

Here and there we find examples of heavy lines of fruit such as peaches and early apples which are sold through auctions in the different markets with apparently very satisfactory results. As stated before, it is action which mainly attracts those who resort to the auction plan of selling. And there are times, of course, when action is imperative. Large lines of fruit which show ripeness and which must be disposed of promptly are often suitable for auction purposes where the purchases are to be rushed out immediately to be taken up by retailers or small buyers and hastened on in their last lap to the consumer.

Among other things which might be argued in favor of auction selling where the commodity seems adapted to the plan is that usually considerably more advertising of brands can be had through the auction catalog, and by having the brands kept before the buyers in the sample lines of fruit displayed about the sales rooms. The very idea of selling at auction presupposes a brand under which the fruit is to be packed and sold. With a good brand covering a good pack, the advertising value of an auction sale is no small item in the scheme of marketing.

One thing I do want to say in this connection, however, is that an auction, like anything else connected with the produce business, ought to be operated honestly and along strictly legitimate lines. The practice of doctoring samples which happens here and there, and too often I might say, ought never to be practiced. The man, whether he be owner or marketing agent, who will doctor a sample and try to get somebody's good money by misrepresenting the quality of what he has to sell is provided for in preceding chapters in which I have had something to say about the right and the wrong of the produce business, at least, as I see it. It is hardly necessary for me to make the statement in so many words that a sample put up to show a line of fruit ought to run true to the entire line. In other words, it should reflect an average of quality and should indicate the real conditions which a buyer might reasonably expect the entire line to show after he had gone into the salesroom and agreed to put up his good money, with one hundred cents in every dollar, for it.

And before leaving this subject I want to have just a word or two with regard to rebates which are frequently paid to brokers by the auc-

tion companies who have the sale of fruits. This is especially applicable to the brokers in New York City who buy the larger part of the foreign lemons sold in this country. It is a well-known fact that many of these brokers in the past have received rebates from the auction people or owners of the fruits, and this practice can hardly be defended on any grounds of legitimate trade. It is a species of graft pure and simple, but it is a question in my mind whether the dealers over the country who have been buying these lemons, and who are supposed to be aware of the real facts, will ever take enough interest in the matter to devise plans to stamp out the practice.

## CHAPTER XV

### ARE THE STORAGES A BANE OR A BLESSING?

The advent of the cold storage some years ago with many later improvements must be conceded as being the beginning of a new epoch in the business of handling fruits and produce.

To be able to store a commodity for several months and to keep it under proper conditions so as to be well preserved, and in some cases actually improved in quality for being stored, is an advantage that must be apparent even to those who are not actually identified with the produce trade.

As a general rule the public at large has little conception of the magnitude or importance of the cold storage business. In some quarters the people have erroneous opinions, and even sensible men who figure in our law making bodies are often guilty of some amazing mistakes with respect to the great storages where refrigeration and warehouse facilities are provided to take care of and discharge the important function of conserving such a large part of the nation's food stuffs every year.

Without aiming at a jump into the middle of my subject, and without any intention of arriving hastily at a conclusion, I want to say that the cold storage industry is one among the great blessings that have been developed in the last half century for the welfare of the general public, and I have no hesitancy in saying further that the storages have done more good than harm, although I do not propose to shield them from some of their malpractices which may have been found to operate seriously to the disadvantage of the public and to the trade, and to the positive detriment of the storages themselves, for there is no doubt that a lot of the adverse criticism and the stringent legislation aimed of late at the storage industry has come from abuses that should never have been allowed, and which should be corrected quickly and completely.

It is because of so much criticism of this kind that I have raised the question set out in the caption of this chapter, and the answer already



given will be fully understood before our survey of the subject is completed.

Primarily, the function of refrigeration as applied to the fruit and produce field is to take care of commodities during a period of plenty and carry the surplus products which may be bought usually at lower prices during the producing season than afterwards in times of scarcity which follow the surplus period, at which later times storage goods are supposed to be taken out and sold.

However, it does not always follow that storage goods will ever see a profit after they are put away, and painful to relate, sometimes the fellow who figures he has a gift of prophecy as well as a little ready cash, gets in wrong and loses some of his ready money as well as fails to reap some long profits in the way of speculation.

Beyond controversy one of the worst influences to be charged against the storage industry is the stimulus it has given to speculation. In fact, the whole storage scheme is one of speculation just as the business of which it is an adjunct is largely a game of chance, as we have already seen.

Nor do the storages promote speculation for the fun of gambling, but simply by virtue of doing business at all and furnishing the service they do. If speculation were ruled out the storage game would be a side issue, whereas with the proposition as now operated it is the fountain head of speculation and gives rise to more produce games of chance than one could count. A little calm reflection will emphasize the truthfulness of this statement.

Without cold storages as now run the egg deal would be a joke during about half the year with extremely low prices during periods of the main producing season and extremely high prices in the winter when few fresh eggs are to be had.

If there were no big storage warehouses capable of furnishing zero temperatures month after month, the butter deal would not be possible as we now have it, and a lot of fine creamery stock would almost certainly go to waste every summer and the public would have little or no butter in the fall and winter.

Other lines such as poultry, apples, cheese, game and various other articles would be on the market for only a short while compared with the present system which makes it possible to prolong the season for some articles indefinitely, and to equalize supply and demand so nicely as to cause little fluctuation, thus holding prices and values more nearly on a parity than would be possible under the old plan of throwing everything on the market at one time, causing a feast and then a famine.



This is apparently in conflict with the statement that storages simulate speculation. But the facts are easily reconciled one with the other when we bear in mind that it is the service furnished by the storages that preserves and protects fruits and produce, and thus gives them a speculative aspect, for if they had to be used up all of a sudden it would offer little encouragement for speculating. This ought to be perfectly clear.

Aside from acting as warehouses the storages sustain a dual function to the trade in negotiating loans which makes them a quasi banker for their patrons who may desire to obtain loans on goods stored.

Most storages also engage in the insurance business and sell policies covering commodities stored, which policies are usually bought in large blocks of underwriters and cut up into smaller amounts to suit different customers.

Perhaps no conclusive arguments can be offered against allowing the storages to perform the functions of banker and underwriter, but there are numerous cases where both functions have been abused to the injury of the general trade and to the disadvantage of the public.

In the very nature of the case when a storage has become interested in a commodity stored with it by having negotiated a loan and having secured the value of the commodity with an insurance policy, it follows that a sort of property interest has been acquired that extends far beyond the original function of a warehouseman, viz.: to furnish refrigeration and warehouse facilities necessary for the preservation and protection of goods placed with the storage for a season, or a contracted period, at a fixed rate for which the actual goods may be and usually are held as security until all claims have been satisfied.

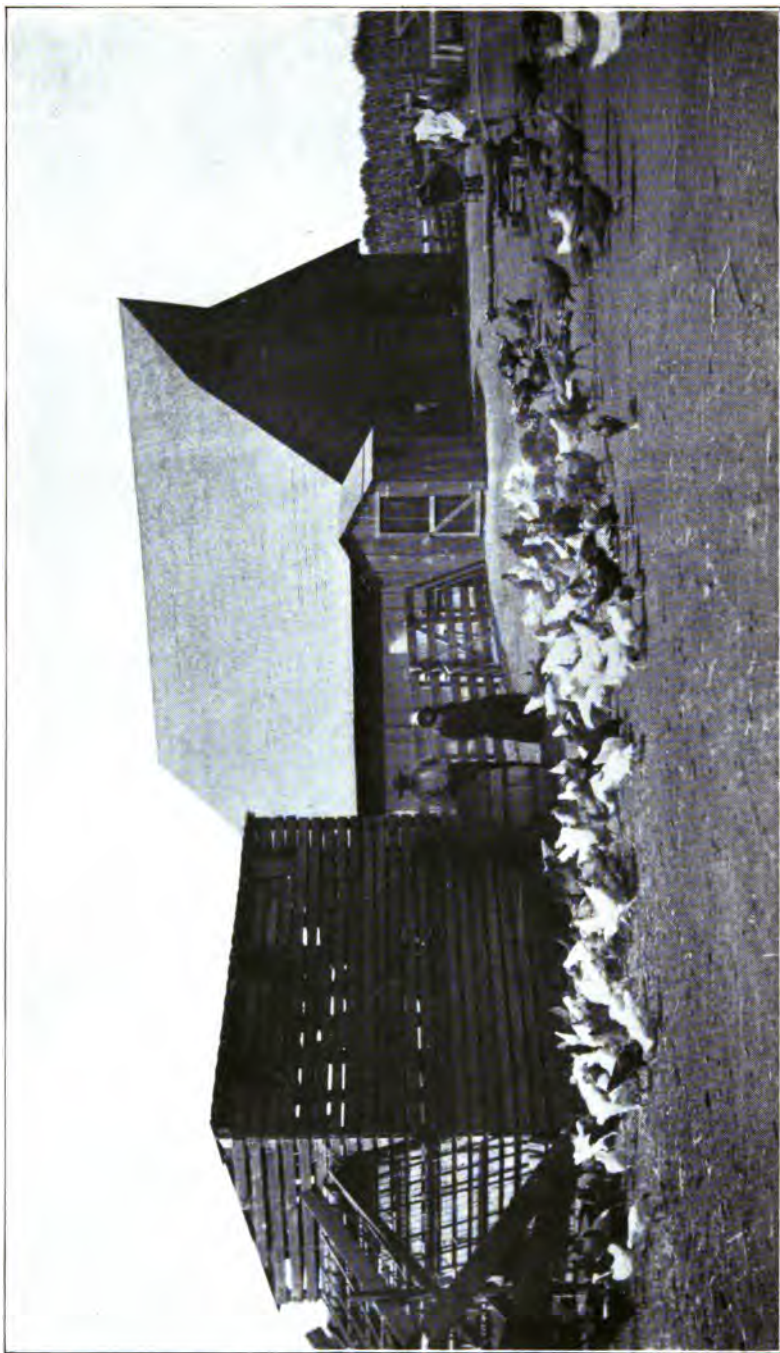
Moreover, the storages are often called upon to act as a commission man or agent for the sale of goods for certain patrons who may have goods stored, and who may find it more convenient and satisfactory for the storage to look after selling the goods at the proper time than for the actual owner to attend to their sale.

Altogether, these collateral functions the storages have assumed have given rise to that next logical function which makes the warehouseman a merchant who owns out and out the goods he stores and makes him a direct competitor of his patron who is buying and selling the same line of goods and who places goods in storage for safe keeping.

It is true many storage men realize and admit that this merchandising is an extreme step, and be it said to their credit there are a few storages that refrain from acting as bona fide merchants buying and selling on their own account, at least, so long as it is possible for them to keep from so doing. Others are open and above board and buy and sell when



ONE DAY'S SALE IN ILLINOIS CENTRAL AUCTION AT CHICAGO—DECIDUOUS FRUITS  
AGGREGATING 36 CARLOADS



CHICKENS ON THE LAGUNA DE TACHE RANCH, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

they feel disposed, and when they see a chance to make a dollar even if at the expense of a majority of their customers whose goods are affected in a large measure by the manipulations of the warehouses when they enter into the buying and selling end of the business.

Frequently complaint is made, and rightly too, among the general trade against the merchandise practice of some of the storages, but it is difficult to find an effective remedy against the practice, for the charter of most of these institutions seems to be so broad as to permit of their doing pretty much as they please about buying and selling. Even if a strict law or set of regulations were enacted and enforced preventing storages from owning outright the products stored in their warehouses, it would be a comparatively easy matter to evade the intent of such laws, as some of the foxy warehousemen have already discovered that it is possible to take goods in under the name of someone else, but which are largely if not entirely the property of the warehouses themselves.

Undoubtedly the prevailing sentiment among the trade is that the cold storage or warehouse should not come into open competition with its patrons by the actual buying and selling of goods. To such an extent do some people in the trade go in opposing this practice that they will not knowingly patronize a storage that does a merchandise business. At all events, when storing goods they give preference to such houses as refrain from doing a merchandise business.

In the future some corrective measures may be worked out and enforced that will confine the storages to their original functions. If such a measure can be found it will be hailed with joy by a majority of the trade, and would, I believe, help put the storages on a better business footing for the future.

The storages cause enough speculation among the trade without becoming speculators themselves, and there is a well founded opinion that the storage business of itself is a source of ample revenue when it has to do solely with furnishing proper refrigeration and safe warehouse facilities at a reasonable cost to patrons in the general trade.

Still, the storage is not immune from losses and hard knocks when it does a speculative business just as is the case with the individual, as we have seen in a previous chapter. It may be that excessive speculation on the part of some greedy warehousemen will prove the right remedy for their merchandise deals, which is only another way of trying "to hog" everything in sight.

In medicine there is an old axiom to the effect that like cures like. Maybe it would also apply to the storage business, for just as the doctors have to cope with insomnia, liver complaint and exaggerated ego, so

do the cold storage warehouses have the same or very slightly modified ailments to plague them, especially when there is an over indulgence in speculation or when common sense rules are disregarded in trying to do business, as happens with warehousemen when they turn merchants. Quite a few of them know their numbers without my reading them out.

It is not far to see that there are well defined limitations and liabilities to which storage warehouses are subject.

No one who has gone over the subject carefully, and who is in position to express an impartial opinion, can believe for a moment that it is not best that stringent, but sensible regulations be prescribed and enforced to keep storage warehouses within certain bounds.

Although during the last few years some impossible state and municipal laws have been attempted in different sections of the country which deserved the opposition of the storage men as well as the trade at large, still it remains that in nearly all cases where regulations even of a mild character are proposed it has been true that the warehousemen have opposed them. This attitude of the storages is certainly calculated to cause suspicion among people who know little of the real facts, and adds to the popular belief that the public would be better off without cold storages especially, and perhaps without common storages too, for the average man draws little distinction between the two.

In addition to complying with certain requirements with respect to equipment, locations, etc. I feel sure that strict regulations should be established to fix a reasonable length of time different commodities shall be kept in storage under certain temperatures and conditions if they shall afterwards be offered for sale to be used for human food. This is too important to be left to haphazard, and rigid inspection rules should be established especially in all storage centers so as to condemn promptly all goods that have so deteriorated as to be unfit for food purposes.

The reason I am talking plainly on this subject is because there have been so many grave abuses of privileges extended the storages in the past I shudder to think of their repetition or continuance, and unless some corrective measures are provided it is too much to expect them to cease, for the warehousemen are only human and I fear the instinct of most men in our day is to swerve too far from the public welfare when there is a sum of money at stake.

I am fully convinced that it would also be a good plan to require all public warehouses to post in a conspicuous place in their houses a certified schedule or list of their contents which list should be revised at stated intervals, and have a sworn statement rendered periodically to proper public officials so as to show the time certain goods had been

stored and which were afterwards to be offered for sale and used for food purposes insofar as their knowledge would show. This information would be invaluable for the trade and for the public.

I am sure I have no prejudice in the matter and that I recognize fully the necessity for the important services rendered the produce trade and the whole country by the storages, but I cannot forget that the public as well as the trade is entitled to a square deal from the storages. And I feel sure the storages would be the winner in the end by having such regulations in force as would insure the correct handling of all storage products, for public confidence is a valuable asset in conducting a warehouse nowadays.

No one can estimate the extent of injury done to such articles as are usually stored unless he gets in close touch with the consuming public, and notes the aversion the average housewife has for those "awful storage goods."

Of course, there are a lot of fake practices necessary to hoodwink the public into using storage products under the guise of being fresh, "just from the dear old farm with the dew on them." I am fully convinced this is all wrong and I believe that it would be best if storage goods were obliged to be sold as such. For example, if the general public were alive to the fact that the best eggs are those produced in March, April and May, and that these eggs can be carried under proper refrigeration until Christmas, there would be an astonishing difference in the way "cooler" eggs are consumed. But how many people eat storage eggs as such?

If people were acquainted with the truth that butter is even better for having been kept under proper refrigeration and that if the quality is good it can be maintained almost indefinitely, it is useless to say the thoughts of "cold storage" butter would ever cause the average citizen to turn up his nose at a tub of superb June extras in mid winter and result in his buying some oleo instead.

"But," somebody says, "it would require an educational campaign to convince the public of its errors in opinions of this kind."

To such I would reply: All reasonable demands in educating the public should be met. It would cost some money and take possibly considerable time, it is true, but the investment would be worth while.

Sure, there are lots of soreheads in the trade who proceed on the theory that the public wants to be flim-flammed, and they apparently think it the proper caper to do as much snide business as possible. But I think it safe to say such men are too insignificant even to draw my fire. They are such as are constantly getting into trouble for their crookedness



and no doubt have enough worry without my provoking them further. But I do want to add that such men do a lasting injury to the handling of storage goods by just such shortsightedness, and this lack of integrity has been the main factor in bringing cold storage products into disrepute. Such influence will have to be counteracted before a remedy can be applied.

The proper length of time to fix as a limit for different commodities to remain in storage under certain conditions is a matter that only experienced people should undertake to say.

It is not guess work, however, for there are tests that can be applied with unerring accuracy, and which will show if food products are unfit for taking into the human system. There is no use killing time with any argument as to whether a limit could and should be fixed for all food products to remain in storage and afterwards to be put on sale.

The matter resolves itself into a question of "can" and "must" in my judgment, for I feel that some day an outraged public will make it worth while for the storages to clean up and be decent as well as to use a little diplomacy and strategy in opposing and defeating laws in which the general trade as well as the public should be interested.

Already a number of the level headed storage men are taking the broader view of matters and are free to admit that some regulations should be provided for the public's protection in the handling of storage products, for they know the American people like fair play and are usually willing to pay a fair price for an article of good quality whether it came from a cold storage or from a furnace.

But people have an aversion to being cajoled into buying what they do not want, and especially when false pretenses are resorted to in order to make them buy.

Naturally, it takes much time and study to get a great industry under way. It also requires much costly experimenting. This is exactly the case with the field of refrigeration, for it was comparatively a visionary scheme a half century ago as compared with the well nigh perfect systems on which they are run today, at least from a mechanical point of view.

It would be a startling revelation to some people even in the trade, to say nothing of the average man outside, to learn that some of the larger storages sometimes have as much as \$2,500,000 out among customers in loans and advances on goods stored. When one considers there are around fifty big institutions of this kind in the country, besides a few hundred plants of lesser magnitude, some idea can be drawn about what the business implies. Yet the storage industry is a new business comparatively speaking.

In view of the extent and importance of the subject I think it is all the more necessary for the storages to be justly but completely regulated in a reasonable way. Further research will probably be worth while before rigid limits are fixed for different articles to be kept under refrigeration. But when it is established that a certain time is to be the limit it should prevail in all cases.

State boards of health, as well as numerous city health officers, have tried from time to time to get measures passed to prevent the storage of undrawn poultry, when as a matter of fact that is the only way it can be properly kept. But it should not be kept too long, and there should be heavy penalties to prevent stuff that has been in the coolers overtime from going out to the consuming public.

The same applies to all other commodities of similar perishable character.



## CHAPTER XVI

### CREDITS AND DISCOUNTS

Whoever has had occasion to watch the average run of business men handling produce will readily agree that credit is entirely too cheap among most of the trade.

It seems to be a kind of maxim that anybody is as good as anybody else so long as he pays good money for what he buys. In truth, this version is correct so far as it goes, but it will not pan out in practice when it comes to extending credit indiscriminately through book accounts or otherwise.

During the past several years I have had occasion to observe a number of instances where retail fruit dealers as well as retail handlers of dairy products, and in fact, all other kinds of produce, deliberately set up and beat the wholesale trade out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in the aggregate. As a general rule they open a small place and are prompt in settling their bills. As soon as a line of credit has been established and the confidence of the wholesale trade has been gained it appears to be the general rule that the retailer who is so disposed can make a clean-up that represents what he would be glad to have as a year's profit on a legitimate business similar in extent to what he is supposed to be conducting.

Gross carelessness in extending credit to those irresponsible retailers only invites disaster, and hundreds of wholesale dealers and jobbers have awakened to the fact that nothing short of complete co-operation for mutual protection can prevent losses from this source. Undoubtedly the system of handling credit information through an association whose secretary issues a sheet every week showing delinquents is a sensible method of dealing with matters of this kind. The experience of the trade in various markets where a good credit association is in operation shows conclusively that losses caused by extending credit to irresponsible parties is reduced to a minimum which is incredibly small when compared

with the enormous volume of business done,—hence the system may be considered almost perfect. No credit system, however, is better than its worst member, for it is alone due to the information given out by every individual member that protects the whole membership.

The retail dealer who knows that he is being watched from every side, and that any irregularity in the settlement of his bills or obstinacy on his part is duly noted and reported, will usually think twice before he will engage in sharp practices if he intends to stay in business long, and even if a retailer is of migratory habits and squats down at one place only long enough to swindle the wholesale trade, he finds the well organized credit association about the worst obstacle he can confront when he tries to put his plans into execution.

Therefore, the credit association serves as an excellent protection both from the standpoint of the delinquent customer in the settlement of his bills and also in keeping the crafty retailer from traveling from town to town at the expense of the wholesale trade.

Too much emphasis, however, cannot be laid upon the importance of establishing and maintaining an association to regulate credits so that it will include in its membership every wholesaler in a market if possible, and also devise such plans as will make every member live up to his obligations. For example: When a retail dealer is delinquent it should be the bounden duty of the party he owes to make a report showing such to be the case, and every other member should refuse positively to extend such delinquent further credit until he has paid what he owes or has made satisfactory arrangements to settle. Fidelity to his obligations on the part of every member is the keystone on which the whole association arch must rest so as to provide a remedy to regulate credits and insure a maximum of protection to the entire membership. If properly worked the results are little short of marvelous.

But not all the trouble found in handling credits is to be regulated by an association. Credits extended in making purchases at shipping points under the bank guarantee plan are equally as perilous if not more so than handling the retail trade in distributing produce. I take it that when money or its equivalent is advanced or surrendered to another party with the expectation of an equivalent value at some subsequent time, that the transaction is one which comes well within the boundary of our present discussion.

Bank guarantees given in payment for goods bought at shipping station on f. o. b. sales, amount to little more or less than a reckless handling of credits which is calculated to demoralize business and perhaps lead to the utter ruin of those who indulge in the pastime of having "your bank wire our bank" etc.

Of course, if the goods bought are all right and if the consignor is all right there is no trouble, but unfortunately the history of such transactions do not lend much encouragement to those who are disposed to extend credit in this fashion. I think it cannot be successfully denied that the proper remedy for this reckless system is to divide the responsibility between the buyer and seller when the bank guarantee is used, and make the payment of such guarantees contingent upon the actual delivery of goods as represented at destination and make them subject to destination inspection under direction of a competent third party. This plan is especially indicated where two parties trading are unacquainted.

Among certain classes of trade in recent years there have been far too many cases where unreasonable discounts or allowances have been made especially by the jobbing trade in filling shipping orders. Often when checks are sent in settlement of invoices there is a notation that a certain amount has been "taken off."

Competition among jobbers has been responsible largely for this state of affairs and no doubt the country merchants and retailers in small towns have been encouraged to a large extent in this questionable practice, and the readiness of the average jobber to allow these discounts helps to salve the conscience of the crooked retailer that may be willing to pay a fancy price when buying if he is allowed a fancy discount when he settles. A little common sense and concerted effort among jobbers is about all that is necessary to dispose of such practices as this. Already jobbers have taken the matter up in some sections and by sticking together have been able to have their invoices paid promptly and with practically no set offs. When clear receipts are signed for goods upon delivery why should any concessions be made in settling for them?

Often rebates have been resorted to as an inducement for trade, but have been found a poor stimulant for business, and the sooner the practice is abandoned the better for all concerned. The buyer who will pay list prices provided he gets a rebate of from one to five per cent is not the most desirable customer whether he is buying for himself individually or whether he is purchasing supplies for others. Rebates as commonly understood amount to little more or less than graft, and there is small excuse for them in modern business. The individual or firm that takes a rebate will give one and will frequently take an additional step if it is necessary to accomplish their ends.

The trouble with the rebate, as with all other inducements designed to secure new trade or to hold old customers, is that they are only a makeshift which amount to nothing in the last analysis, for if one's

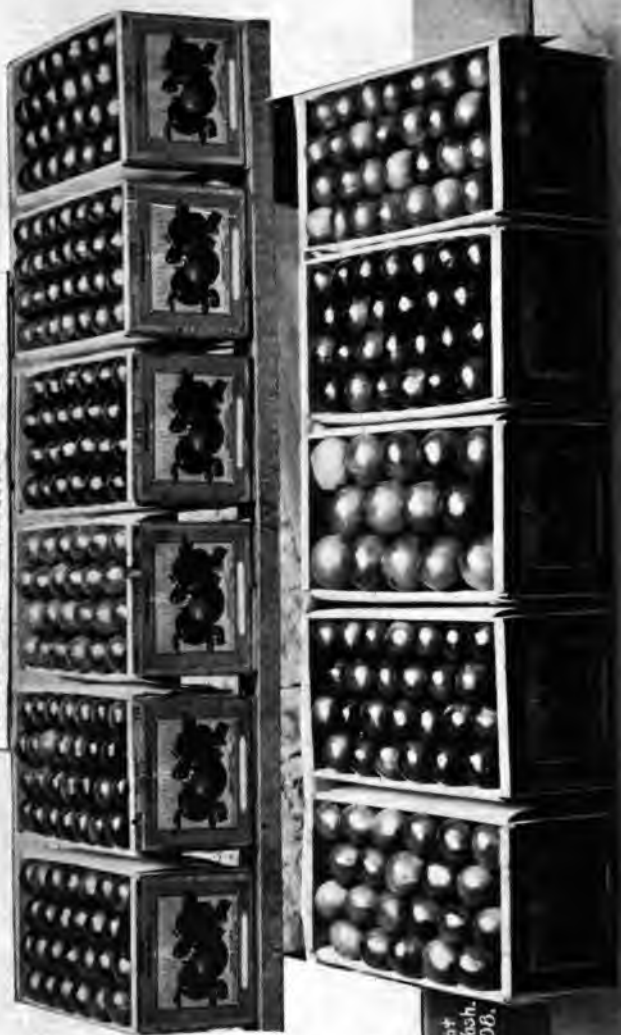


**MARYLAND PEACHES—A STRING OF PEACHES NEARLY A MILE LONG**



**THE OTHER END OF THE LINE—WHERE CARS ARE LOADED FOR SHIPPING**

**YAKIMA COUNTY  
HORTICULTURAL UNION**



**STYLE OF APPLE PACKING AND PACKAGE USED FOR WASHINGTON APPLES**

competitor meets one's concessions in the way of prices it is hard to see if any advantage has been gained or lost by either party compared with the conditions before the extra concession or inducement was made. If anything, both competitors are injured.

For example: If oranges are selling at \$3.50 per box and a rebate of five per cent is being allowed by A, it can readily be seen that B, who sells the same oranges at \$3.50 without a rebate will lose business to A. But as soon as B wakes up to the real situation and makes his rebate five per cent also, it is quite apparent that both dealers or jobbers are in precisely the same relation to each other as competitors that they sustained prior to the time the rebate was fixed upon. But they are both worse off for their price cutting.

In handling credits and discounts it frequently develops that confidence is misplaced. Men who were believed to be upright and who were extended credit and the usual courtesies in business, frequently show themselves up to be only one of the ordinary kind of callous individuals who smiles when something is being handed to him and frowns when he has to give up something.

To be able to handle credits intelligently it requires an expert in charge of that branch of the business, and I strongly advise having one man in each jobbing house devote much of his time, if not quite all to the subject where sufficient business is done to justify it.

Before leaving the subject I want to advise strongly against taking long odds in handling credits. If you know a retailer or any buyer is doubtful, by no means invite your own loss by extending him more credit than he should have. I am fully aware that in many cases long chances have been taken and no loss has resulted, but it is undoubtedly true that enough losses have been incurred where indiscriminate credit has been extended to make it worth while to exercise great care in handing over one's goods to an unscrupulous scamp, maybe a plain huckster, without some form of security other than his word, which itself is probably spoken in broken English.

Many dealers have paid dear for their experience in handling credits and there is no doubt but the future generation of fruit jobbers and wholesalers will be able to profit materially by some of the mistakes of their predecessors. I incline to the opinion that some of the wise ones in the next generation will prefer to have articles of produce decay now and then and be sent to the dump in preference to handing them over to someone else who sells them, pockets the money and goes on a tour for his health, and who is enabled to continue this practice indefinitely because of the stupid way credits are often handled by the

wholesale and jobbing trade in trusting Tom, Dick and Harry for whatever they want to buy on their own terms.

It has been aptly pointed out by some that credit will always be easy in the fruit and produce field, because the trade is forced to sell goods to whoever wants to buy.

In a way there is some truth in this claim, especially when markets are oversupplied and when it is imperative that goods be moved as speedily as possible. But it seems to me that a great deal of trouble and money could be saved if dealers would use a bit more caution in allowing the light weight operators to load up heavily just because they are ready to take on supplies.

Frequently peddlers or retailers jump into the market and by their actions as good as tell the wholesalers they are in for a clean up. Yet it seems as a general thing nobody pays any heed to the danger signal, and it usually follows there is a missing face within a day or two along the row, or at its accustomed hang out.

How many Italian villas and how many sumptuous mansions in the Isles of Greece are being maintained from funds procured in this way, we can only surmise.

But there are those in the trade who have good reasons for supposing they have contributed enough to rebuild Rome and restore Greece.

And as long as present methods are followed in making credit so easy we shall have clean-ups and more clean-ups. Lots of small buyers who can buy their "heads off" in whatever market they happen to be near, should be held strictly to cash and if most of them were handling any other line of business than produce they would be held to a cash basis.

It is not my intention to cast any reflection upon the foreigners in the produce line, or to say a word against the small dealer, but unless they represent some assets or have some backing I maintain that it is folly to encourage them to beat the trade as so often happens by extending them an opportunity to jump out and buy a heavy line of goods and skip after sacrificing their purchases.

Another matter I have in mind, and which may properly receive a bit of attention in this connection is the shield afforded by our national bankruptcy law to those who misuse credit and violate confidences in the trade nearly every day.

It would be hard to imagine any single factor which has served to make credits so uncertain as this very law, which I am sorry to say is a blot on our commercial escutcheon in this country.

How easy it seems for a fellow to go out and get other people's money

tied up in various deals, maybe salted away wholly or in part, and then go into court and have his hands washed of all obligations, and which washing process permits him to go ahead much the same as before.

I have no doubt that the intent of the law is good, but in practical application it comes about as nearly putting a premium upon dishonesty in seeking and using credit accommodations as anything I could imagine.

Hundreds of cases have I seen in fruit and produce circles where heavy losses have been saddled upon people where there were indications only too clear to the eye of a business man that there was "something rotten in Denmark."

Possibly the criminal phase of this law has never been properly invoked. But generally speaking, those who find they have got to depend upon collecting 5% to 20% of the amount of their claim's value in a bankruptcy proceeding seem to figure that it is a waste of time to even attend court.

Here is where the crook has a great advantage. He has your money and the law actually upholds him until you dig up some evidence upon which a prosecution might be based.

It does not seem quite fair, and the movement among the National Association of Credit Men to accumulate a fund to investigate all bankruptcy cases and prosecute vigorously where fraud is discovered, is certainly deserving of the support of the trade at large as well as the business public generally.

The scoundrel who sets out for an escapade, acknowledges he will lie for commercial purposes, brow beats and four flushes his way until he is several hundred thousand dollars to "the bad,"—withal maybe money salted away—and files a petition in bankruptcy, gets up and sheds crocodile tears, saying he has simply played in "hard luck," but with people knowing the MAN, as they knew one notable character in Chicago a few years ago to be anything but an angel—should be made an example of and I say such fellows should be wearing stripes.

The records of most bankruptcy cases almost make a man want to take a shot gun and—go snipe shooting.



## CHAPTER XVII

### EVILS IN THE TRADE THAT NEED CORRECTION

I admit that I approach this subject with some degree of timidity, for it is always more easy to point out defects than to find a proper remedy for existing evils and bad practices,—more easy to be critical than to be correct.

But there are so many aggravated cases that come up constantly which show that there are certain disorders among the produce trade which are badly in need of correction I hardly refrain from offering a few suggestions for troubles that have tended to make losses and break that confidence upon which all satisfactory dealing must rest.

It is cowardly to evade our own faults and sometimes equally cowardly to pass unnoticed those of others. Men in the trade who want to devote their efforts to the betterment of conditions often seem afraid to take the initiative, and seem to be content that things should continue as they are running.

To remedy evils perhaps requires a sacrifice on the part of someone. Those who are broad enough and progressive enough to undertake a solution of long standing disorders should have the support and sympathy of the better class of people in and out of the trade in trying to create a sentiment that will support a movement looking to the general improvement of trade conditions.

Heretofore, in handling preceding questions in this volume it has been observed that people in the produce business are probably no worse, if no better, than men in other walks of life. Therefore, it is no reflection on the trade, as such, to say that plain dishonesty is the cause of most troubles and is responsible for a majority of losses of money and some friendships among those whose lot is cast with the various branches of the produce business.

Of course, dishonesty is a broad term and it must be dissected and analyzed if its import and mischief are to be fully comprehended.

Neither time nor space in this volume or outside will permit of formulating a code of rules that will suffice to govern every form of dishonesty, for its manifestations are infinite and its symptoms are legion. We have observed in a previous chapter that conscience is usually a safe guide to determine what is right. But there are those who sometimes seem incapable of drawing the right conclusion even after a protracted conference with their inner selves. It is most likely true that when conscience has been seared by a hot iron it is incapable of performing its normal function. But if there are those in the trade whose consciences cannot be depended upon to distinguish between plain cases of right and wrong, and if their reason is so deficient as to fail to discriminate between "mine" and "thine," it is no doubt best that such people be placed in a sanitarium and treated for kleptomania.

But it is sometimes the case that errors of the head are confused with errors of the heart. A commission man who encourages consignments when he knows or should know that he is powerless to make good his quasi promise so far as prices are concerned, may shirk responsibility if there is a bad break and losses are incurred by the plain declaration that he was honest in his predictions about market conditions, and that if he gave out wrong information it was not intentional. There are numerous cases where this screen has been made use of and where there was a preponderance of evidence showing there was, at least, criminal ignorance on the part of the commission man in soliciting heavy shipments when the market outlook did not justify the line of information he sent out about market prospects.

In a way this comes under the same general head as overquotations. But the plain overquotation or high bid for produce is a clear cut case of an error of the heart; whereas, the wrong kind of dope on market prospects may be due to bad judgment on the part of the firm or individual who may be responsible for it and, therefore, an error of the head.

Inasmuch as losses may be incurred by shippers from either kind of error, and since the losses are positive in both cases, the shipper may not be able or disposed to draw a very clear distinction between the two.

The proper remedy for an error of the heart, where there is unmistakable evidence of fraud, is the same as should be applied for the plain kind of dishonesty we find in the highway robber. By this I mean, there should be legal redress and the limit of punishment under the law should be applied to all out and out cases of crookedness.

How best to deal with real errors of the head no man can say. But I believe that it would be an excellent plan if some system could be pro-

vided for a rigid examination for all those in the trade who essay to offer their services to the public as agents or factors for handling fruits and produce for the account of others, and a license should be given only to those who make a creditable showing in an examination properly conducted by duly constituted authorities, and those who lack such honesty, skill and judgment as ought to be part and parcel of every commission man's make-up should be made to refrain from doing business. Perhaps some such regulations should be provided as would make it impossible for such unskilled and incompetent fellows as we occasionally run across to continue to operate except under strict supervision of the authorities.

I am fully aware that by offering such a suggestion I am liable to be charged with being revolutionary, and some may take the ground that such regulations would be unreasonable or maybe unconstitutional. But how about such regulations in other lines? Once upon a time almost anybody could try his hand at practicing medicine. What was the result? The quack finally killed so many people that the public was compelled to take some precautions about allowing every jack-leg to administer physic. Even the lawyers have to be admitted to the bar after a prescribed course of study, and surely there is no walk of life where the inexorable rule of the survival of the fittest is in more relentless operation than in the legal profession. Yet they are not permitted to begin in their work until they show suitable fitness.

Again, civil engineers have to spend long years of study in preparation for their work; the trained agriculturist or horticulturist must do an infinite amount of preparation to be in line with modern conditions. But any dub who has the hunch, and a little ready cash to get a lot of morning glory stationery printed (this is highly essential these days) can style himself a "commission merchant," and who can say him nay?

The better element in the trade, which certainly predominates, should take a keen interest in providing some remedy so as to make it harder for every Tom, Dick and Harry to put up a big sign and begin operations, mostly on hot air. A movement of the right kind backed by the whole trade would go a long way towards removing the stigma which attaches to the word "commission merchant" in some sections of the country.

Intelligent men cannot be sincere if they doubt that my plan to have a state license for commission men is perfectly feasible. Is not the commission merchant as much a public servant as an undertaker? Nowadays the undertakers must be licensed. I am sure most shippers would prefer to be handled right while alive by a licensed public servant than



HARVESTING PEACHES IN MASON COUNTY, MICHIGAN



RIPE ORANGES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

to wait until they are dead, maybe starved to death by bad losses from shipping incompetent and dishonest commission houses that could and should be put out of business in due course of law. For such houses are a nuisance and an eye-sore to the trade and the general public as well, where they show an utter lack of such knowledge and principle as is necessary to handle shipments of fruits and produce as they should be. I submit that these "lame ducks" should be eliminated from the commission field, and the sooner the better. I advance no opinion about the probable number of so-called commission men that would be frozen out under a rigid license system, but there are a number of them who would not be able to make the proper showing if the correct test were applied. I shall take up this proposition for further treatment in a latter chapter.

In foregoing chapters attention has been called to the evils of padding sales, jealous and insane competition among dealers, cutting commissions, rebating and the get-rich-quick fever, etc. Reference is only made to them again in this connection so that we may not forget them, and I desire to reiterate that they are crying evils which ought to be suppressed. Some further remedies may be suggested for their treatment later on.

There is one other evil I want to refer to, and I find I have neglected to list a gentleman that perhaps should have been introduced in the first chapter when we were defining the general trade.

I refer to "Peter Ruby." He is the straw man of the produce business and he usually gets his fine Italian hand at work when car lots are made up by several shippers and sent to one market, the cars containing various packages of goods for different houses. Such shipments are usually looked after by a general consignee who works for a small fee paid by shippers whose purpose is to secure a lower transportation rate by shipping in car lots than can be had on less than car lots.

"Peter Ruby" is the man for whose account a shipment is sold when it is checked out and delivered from the warehouse, car or wharf by mistake to the wrong house, or at least to a house other than the one for which it was intended. Sometimes "Peter" is traced down, sometimes he escapes. It is needless to say he was conceived in dishonesty and thrives on trickery.

Egotism is another evil that has made headway among the trade here and there. Possibly it would be better to diagnose this trouble as plain swell head. I should be the last fellow in christendom to argue that everybody in the trade should not have due self respect, and recognize the important service to the general public that is rendered by the trade. But I fail to see where there is warrant for the blatant arrogance one

finds now and then in certain individuals identified with growing, shipping and marketing produce. I know these self appointed grantees are comparatively rare in the trade, but they are far too numerous when measured by the "valuable service" they discharge in the general order of business affairs. I regret that during several years' observation among the general trade I have beheld a few disgusting examples that make it necessary to refer to this nauseating minority, and were it not people out of the trade are likely to measure the personnel of the whole trade by this cod fish nobility I should pass this matter unnoticed. Robert Burns perhaps did not have them in mind when he wrote "O, wad to God some gift to gae us to see oursel as others see us," but nothing could be more applicable. In short, humility is a virtue that is little known among some classes of the trade, who are little known themselves outside of a limited few.

Before I am voted a rabid fault finder I might draw the veil on this subject. But I have one more evil that I want to call attention to, and in doing this I think I can lay claim to a bit of originality.

Did it ever occur to anyone else that in all probability a great many other evils in the trade are caused in a large measure from the surroundings of commission men? To make myself clear, I refer to the places of business, the stores, the offices and the location of many produce houses in various markets.

Upon my word, I only speak of some places where produce is sold as "stores" through courtesy. Buildings that offend instead of please from an architectural standpoint, that appear to have been constructed with no aim at sanitation; that are foul and stuffy, and are better for housing plunder than for handling produce, are considered by a few grasping landlords as being the very yarn for a produce dealer. It is amazing what excessive rents are paid for some of these shacks one runs across here and there.

I break into this subject in all reverence for the finer feelings of those people who may be domiciled in some of these pig pens. Before moving another peg, however, I want to go on record by saying a few of the best people I ever met in the trade, or out of it, were quartered in some of these grimy places. And before moving another peg I shall have to add a further statement to the effect that many of the worst specimens of produce sharks I ever ran across were ensconced in joints of this kind. A further statement I must make leads to my conclusion: the surroundings, the atmosphere, the general influence of such places are bound to leave their effects upon those who are daily under their spell. The effect is positive and it cannot be evaded. The good people in foul dens either die young or move to better quarters.

Hold on, gentle reader,—I am still on terra firma. You may suppose I have gone sailing among the clouds. But to convince you that I am still in possession of my senses, I want to whisper that I know as well as you that in handling poultry, veal, eggs, potatoes, onions, etc. and some other kinds of produce it is a hard matter to keep perfectly clean. Yes, I know that as well as you. But I submit that I have been through a fertilizer factory that was almost perfect in its equipment, and had very few stray odors floating around outside of certain rooms. There are lots of the better class of produce houses where they keep reasonably clean and they handle plenty of business too. A mistaken idea seems to have got into some minds that the handling of fruits and produce is essentially a nasty business. I cannot agree to the proposition at all.

May I say it in print! I fear some men in the trade have become afflicted with a disease from staying day after day, year after year in ill adapted, insanitary stores and offices!

I am averse to theory as a general proposition, but I believe in psychology, for it is true gospel. This great science of the mind teaches and proves that what we associate with for a long while we absorb and it becomes a part of us. This is a fact not because psychology teaches it, but we know it is true from actual experience. Honest men run a great risk by accepting chances to impair their moral fibre when they submit to doing business in a dinky little den or basement, badly lighted and with worse ventilation which allows foul odors to accumulate and concentrate so as to be nauseating to an outsider upon going in, provided he is accustomed to God's sunlight and fresh air.

I know this evil is not so easily disposed of as might be imagined. But in the light of decency and common sense I submit that it is an evil of the rankest kind, and some remedy should be worked out and applied with a gentle hand if possible, but with an iron hand if necessary.

High rents in the larger cities where the evil is most prevalent, is of course, the main difficulty in the way of larger and better quarters for all the trade. However, there has been too much haphazard in selecting the average produce district and in constructing the buildings to be used. So far as possible uniformity should prevail in the character and size of buildings, but all quarters need not be of the same size. If one firm could not use all of a medium size, decent store, the unused space could be rented to someone else. There is no good reason why better facilities cannot be had. The main trouble has been too many men have been careless in this respect and have not figured out that economy in rents, where morals are involved, not only may be, but actually is, sheer folly and



extravagance. Another thing in favor of more modern, sanitary stores and offices is the fact that more business can be handled in a shorter time with much less trouble and expense. A man's efficiency cannot have full play except under proper influences. Cleanliness is one of them.

Surely, the produce business is of sufficient importance to make it worth while to have every good man in good quarters. If I were a shipper and intended to do business with a commission man I would either pay him a visit and inspect his surroundings or else ask him to have them photographed at my expense and send me the pictures. If they looked suspicious or had a "sour smell" I would side step any business with him.

On the other hand if I were a buyer, the way I would pass up a fine line of stuff at cut prices if I had to hold my nose and bark my shins to buy! Two to one I would prefer paying a little better price some place else.

Do you realize there are more and more people looking at the matter in this way every day?

Hasn't the trade the right to insist upon decent surroundings in which to work? Those who stop for a moment's reflection can hardly make a wrong answer,

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LEGISLATION RELATING TO AND AFFECTING THE TRADE

In a large measure the fruit and produce business is like necessity, for it knows no law. So diversified and scattered are the various factors and interests, and so irregular and uncertain are the seasons and conditions that it is very difficult to make things happen after a fixed plan, which is necessary to comply with the requirements of rigid statutes or court decisions.

But laws are supposed to surround, permeate and govern everybody and everything. Quite true it is that there are important and specific laws relating to and affecting the trade, although many of them are honored more in the breach than in the observance.

In view of the peculiar circumstances just referred to, and the constant changes and varied conditions incident to the handling of produce, it is a debatable question if a code of written laws can be relied upon to secure that which all law holds paramount, viz.: equal and exact justice among all men. Were it possible for a sufficiently high order of intelligence to prevail among the trade, equity, which is higher than the written law, ought to govern instead of trying to apply an inflexible statute providing "that John Doe shall or shall not do certain things, and if he does or does not do as the law prescribes he shall be subject to certain fixed penalties, etc."

In a former chapter we have observed that it is often a hard matter, in some cases at least, for the courts to determine what is right and what is wrong, and we have also called attention to the fact that conscience exercised as a function of a normal intellect is the safest and most speedy guide in affairs relating to the produce business, or in shaping the general conduct of individuals or aggregations of individuals.

Conscience, however, as we have also observed, may become inert and useless when seared with a "hot iron," as we read about in the writings of the Apostle Paul. But I must say that my observations, extending

over several years and coming in touch with several thousand individuals in the trade, lead me to believe that the percentage of people both in and out of the trade who cannot rely on conscience as being a safe moral guide is small indeed.

Provided a set of laws could be framed that would cover every wrong and provide a suitable remedy, and which would contemplate every contingency that might arise in the produce business, and which might be elastic enough in their application so as to excuse an offender who could plead reasonable mitigating circumstances, and which at the same time could be invoked in all of their severity to punish the confirmed crook who gives himself over bodily to wrong doing for the love of it, such regulations would be a boon to the produce trade, and would be entitled to high rank in the judicial as well as in the business world.

But the very difficulty of making a law which would be severe enough to punish some persistent offenders, and yet mild enough to excuse some others who may be offenders through accident or sheer ignorance, is at once the main difficulty in regulating the produce business strictly from a legal point of view.

It is infinitely to be preferred that a healthy sentiment be created among the trade which puts a premium on honest dealing instead of trying to provide a series of legal safeguards and remedies. No law or set of laws have ever made a bad man good, but some laws which were designed for the moral uplift and protection of humanity have made some reasonably good men seem bad when their conduct is measured solely after statutes and court decisions.

Of course, present laws, admittedly more or less imperfect, are infinitely better than no laws at all, for it is only the fear of the law that keeps some men in the produce trade from being worse than they are. The main trouble with wholesome and desirable laws that are aimed at regulating fruit and produce matters is that they are not always fearlessly and impartially enforced. This failure is perhaps not so much the fault in the laws as the officers of the law and the courts. But the lack of such provisions in a law as to secure its enforcement is a defect that must needs be charged against the law itself. Instead of a wholesome respect for and a loyal obedience to the law among officials in this country, there is often a disposition to adroitly make certain provisions inoperative and useless.

Primarily, the relation sustained between a commission merchant and a shipper of fruits and produce is that of principal and agent or factor. This relation is one of ancient origin and is in general operation among all civilized peoples, I believe. For a fee in the form of a commission

generally computed on a percentage basis a service is extended by the agent or factor in buying or selling certain articles as arranged between the principal and agent, or else as determined by the custom of a market or as applied universally in handling a given commodity. Where the agent or factor fails to do his duty or is guilty of keeping back more than his rightful pay for his services, it is easy to see that a legal remedy should be provided and speedily enforced when necessary.

It is interesting to observe that in actual practice the average commission man assumes the role of an arbitrary umpire from whose decision there is often little recourse or appeal when an error or wrong is alleged and its correction is sought.

A shipper may argue that his goods were of a certain quality and that ruling market prices entitle him to certain returns. He is politely informed, we will assume (and the writer has observed many similar cases), that he has been paid every penny his goods brought, less the actual transportation for their carriage to market and the commission arising from their sale. If extreme steps are taken and litigation is resorted to for adjustment, the shipper usually finds he has his pains for his trouble in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, for it is generally an easy matter to fortify the commission man's position, whether right or wrong, unless of course, there is a palpable case of fraud. We leave out of count the question as to whether the shipper or commission man is in the wrong.

In calling attention to this state of affairs it will be unnecessary, I hope, for me to say that it is not my aim to cast any insinuations on the trade at large, but I merely lead up to what I have in mind and the point I set out to make, viz.: Some safeguard ought to be provided alike for the honest commission merchant against unjust accusations, and for the relief of the anxious, and maybe unfortunate shipper, who may not suffer as much as he supposes, but who should have a form of protection that could co-operate with his factor or agent in convincing him that no undue advantage is being taken of him in the sale of his property.

What would be fair so as to secure a "square deal" for all parties concerned? Could a national law be passed that would provide a proper inspection service applying to all shipments at destination and also provide for the complete auditing of records kept by commission men? If so, would the adoption of such a system be practical in everyday affairs?

After considerable thought on the subject I am of the firm opinion that a federal statute should be provided to regulate commission men and their commissions if a law of this character can be enacted and enforced. I am confident that no remedy short of a national law can ever accomplish

the desired ends. We have already seen that commission men easily fall under the classification of quasi-public servants, for their services are usually open to any shipper. From a common sense point of view the commission man must be regarded an important factor in supplying the nation with food stuffs. His trust is one in which the public is vitally concerned directly and indirectly. So much of his business is of an interstate character that no legislation short of a federal statute could have the desired effects in regulating matters now complained of, and in dealing intelligently with new troubles that may come up later. If a federal statute of this kind could be had it would be well, in order to make the system thoroughly effective, that the various states pass laws parallel with the national law, at least, in essential features. Some able lawyers who have looked into the plan do not doubt its feasibility.

It would be highly desirable to have a uniform system of accounting adopted everywhere after the simplest and most approved plans possible, and provide for regular auditing of records under government supervision where fruits and produce are handled on the consignment plan, provided the business is placed under federal regulation.

Inspection of goods on arrival at destination, especially in all the larger markets, under this plan, should be made compulsory, not only for the protection of consignors, but for the protection of the general public as well, as it is about the only way to cope successfully with the impure food problem, which is still a problem in this country. The results under the federal meat inspection act have been so good that it is only a short step to all other food stuffs, particularly of a highly perishable nature. Such inspection would not necessarily complicate the handling of all legitimate business.

I know that many people in the trade will oppose bitterly the proposition I make, and some will declare the idea as being crazy. But it should be recalled that the big meat packers assumed the same attitude towards the meat inspection law before it was passed and were found fighting the proposition to the last ditch. The trouble with many men in the trade is that they want absolutely no provisions made to regulate the produce business except as each individual man or firm may make and then be allowed to break as often as he or they wish or dare. Perhaps it is not going too far to say that the sooner such men are brought to realize that they are in need of some regulation the better it will be for the trade at large.

Too long it has been the case that matters have run along in a haphazard fashion in the fruit and produce business. Lack of proper regulation is in a large measure responsible for a great deal of the aimless



PACKING APPLES IN BARRELS—SOUTHERN ILLINOIS SCENE



**MARKETING SCENES IN DELAWARE—THE ELBERTA PEACH IS IN ITS GLORY AND  
THE MULE THRIVES LIKE THE GREEN BAY TREE**

and dangerous speculation we run across so often. I am sure it is utterly useless to waste words in arguing that it is not only feasible, but highly necessary for governmental regulation of a great many if not all produce affairs. At least, certain broad requirements under federal regulation should be complied with.

The main reasons for such a system is: First, Because it is the only plan that is comprehensive enough to be effective. Second, A constantly increasing element is to be found in this country who have not the proper respect for any regulation short of that enforced by the general government. Third, Conditions demand some safeguards for the handling of the enormous volume of business after the most approved system, which can be best worked out by government agents in co-operation with the best people in the trade so as to secure maximum profits in handling business after a modern, uniform system. Fourth, The information obtained about fruits and produce handled under governmental regulation would be of inestimable value to the various government departments, and to the whole people as well, as much vital data could be acquired about the results of growing and shipping certain varieties of fruits and vegetables, and also the volume of business in certain commodities, about the nature and extent of which little is known at the present time. Besides, there are other additional good reasons why the general government should concern itself in produce matters, and I feel that public sentiment will develop to the point in a comparatively short time that a popular demand will call for some action along this line. It cannot come too soon, and I say this as a thoroughly impartial observer of the manner of handling this business as it is now conducted.

To go back to the commission man as an agent, we find that there are laws in all the states providing certain penalties for failure of commission men to do or not to do certain things as prescribed by law.

In a majority, if not in all the states, it is a criminal offense, punishable as a felony, for a commission merchant to fail or to refuse to make due accounting and send all net proceeds to all shippers for all goods entrusted to him to sell. It is a fact nevertheless that this law is often violated, for it is frequently true that it costs more to collect money justly due than the amount involved is worth, and this fact often prevents proper action to obtain redress even when shippers have a just grievance. The national government can weed out crooks and help put the produce business on the higher commercial plane on which it should rest. There is no way of elevating the business as it should be except to make it difficult if not impossible for crooks to reap an easy harvest, either from a systematic campaign of stealing a little here and there, or from making a



plunge in a short while and then skipping out to repeat the same trick some place else.

Among recent pieces of legislation that have interested the produce public is the so called national rate bill to which reference has been made in a former chapter. Undoubtedly, the rate law is good as far as it goes, but it is hardly sufficient to accomplish the desired ends unless amended. Transportation, as we have already seen, is one of the most vital factors in the produce business as well as in every other line of commercial activity. No one in the trade who has had occasion to observe the methods of railroads, express companies and the various boat lines, can doubt for a moment that these great agencies should be under strict governmental regulation which will secure proper service at a reasonable cost. Proper legislation is the only means the trade has to bring about this desired result, and as new conditions arise demanding changes, no time should be lost in securing such amendments to the rate law and to other laws as may be found necessary. Possibly a new scheme of regulation will be required, and maybe some far reaching measures will have to be resorted to before the trade at large can get such treatment as it should and must have in the future.

In different states various trade organizations have interested themselves along with the business public generally in having state laws passed providing for reciprocal demurrage. These laws relate to trade matters and affect the produce business vitally. There is no reason why the trade at large should not endorse and demand reciprocal demurrage. It is a good form of insurance against unnecessary delays in shipping.

When railroads fail or refuse to provide the necessary equipment to move perishable traffic they should be forced to pay the losses resulting from such carelessness or inefficiency in their operations. In states where laws of this character are in force it is found they help more speedily to secure such proper transportation facilities as should be provided.

It is interesting to note the trend of sentiment over the country in reference to cold storages and the expression of popular feeling which has been crystalized in various city and state laws as have been proposed during the past few years. Practically all of these regulations have been aimed at the storages apparently on the mistaken theory that they are public nuisances. Reference has been made to this subject already, and it has been seen that the storages really assume the same attitude with the rest of the trade when it comes to passing any rules for their regulation. They oppose them from sheer force of habit.

I am of the opinion that just and reasonable laws governing storages

should be demanded and supported by the trade at large. These houses occupy much the same relation to the public as commission men, and it might not be amiss for the general government to have surveillance over the cold storages also, for most products kept in storages go into interstate traffic. I am afraid, however, the chief aim of many of the city ordinances and state laws which have been proposed for the regulation of cold storages has been to seriously interfere with their legitimate functions and have not been as fair as they should in their provisions towards restrictions that are sometimes unnecessary, and that are perhaps too exacting. Many of these laws have doubtless been conceived as "sand bag" measures and dropped as soon as certain grafting politicians had gotten up a "jack pot" from interested parties.

In a work of this kind it is utterly impossible to even refer briefly to the legal phase of all matters in which the trade is interested. Frequently it is necessary to resort to the courts to establish one's rights under the law. In all such cases a conference should be had with a reliable attorney for advice or assistance. A good lawyer is absolutely necessary in most cases to protect one's rights when no redress or satisfaction can be had except by going to law. One other suggestion I want to offer: When you find a good lawyer do not fail to show the proper appreciation for his services. Do not consider because he demands a stiff fee that his services are too costly, for it is generally the case that the high priced lawyer is the cheapest after all.

Avoid litigation whenever possible, but when it is necessary to go into court, do so with a determination to win, provided you are in the right, and nobody should get into court as a plaintiff in a civil suit unless he is in the right.

As the principle of arbitration becomes better understood it will be more popular, and will take the place of a great deal of expensive and uncalled for litigation.

A few good laws strictly enforced are better for the trade and the public than a complex maze of legal verbiage that too often means nothing, and if one now and then means something, to have to resort to the higher courts to discover what that meaning may be.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PRODUCE AND PATRIOTISM

Just as patriotic impulses are inspired from contemplating noble deeds of sacrifice or heroic service, so are lofty feelings awakened by those in the produce trade who have made possible the successes of others by themselves achieving success.

It would make interesting reading if a series of true biographical sketches of the real leaders of thought and action in the trade were properly put together showing the far reaching influences here and there that have been exerted on trade affairs, possibly for all time to come, by these whole souled, patriotic fellows who have often labored for the cause of the entire trade when they were apparently working for themselves alone. Occasionally we find these bold mariners turning their keels into unsailed and uncharted seas, and there are cases where some of these ships are still at sea with no tidings to show if they are 'freighted down on their return with rich cargoes of merchandise, or if they have been left derelict after being robbed and maybe scuttled by pirates.

It is not my purpose to go into details and print names of the men who have been bold enough and patriotic enough to launch out trying to discover new empires to exploit, to find new fields to develop, not alone for their benefit but for the welfare of others also, for no patent or copyright can be secured on the average produce discovery, although it is made after considerable outlay of money and much worry, and the benefits accruing are eventually shared by everybody in the trade.

But with some folks produce matters make a poor compound with patriotic principles. One is sordidly narrow to them; the other must be joyously broad if it exists at all. With such people the spirit of co-operation is a feeling they know little about. When patriotism had no place in the trade was prior to the discovery that certain evils could be dealt with and overcome, or at least alleviated, best by concerted action, instead of going on the ancient theory that every man can always fight

his battles alone. As men become more intelligent they are naturally broader and more patriotic in their views.

Education is evolution. Conditions surrounding the trade today were undreamt of fifty years ago. The wonderful strides that have taken place in other lines of business during the past few years have their parallel in the great fruit and produce industry. With all this progress has come responsibility, and responsibility implies certain duties that are largely patriotic services in their last analysis.

I wonder if it has never occurred to a majority of people that all men engaged in the growing, shipping and selling of produce are not actuated solely by the dollar in doing the work they have in hand. Quite true it is that many men in the trade have yet to learn that there is a great world outside their own little sphere of business, and even beyond that there is a boundless universe of feeling and action.

As a man or a set of men become broader and deeper they become better, perhaps not so much from a strictly orthodox standpoint as from a humanitarian point of view, for it cannot be denied that the higher standards among produce people have stimulated a keener sympathy for one another's ills, and has given rise to a genuine appreciation of one another's true worth and importance.

Any business that is conducted on the plan of every fellow for himself and the devil take the hindmost, is sure to produce a class of men, narrow, selfish, and a menace instead of a blessing to the whole body politic. While there are a few men in the trade who have not caught the modern spirit that bids them wish others a share of the success they hope for themselves, and which extends good cheer to others, and who may fail to understand that their obligations involve some idea of patriotic service as well as a bare means of making a living, the number of such unfortunates is certainly being reduced to a decreasing minority.

To be a successful produce man in any branch of the trade one must be broad, if not deep, and usually those who are broad have but another step to take in order to be deep, in thought, feeling and action. A business that extends all over the country and that necessarily brings one in touch with so many different kinds of people, ought to be an excellent exercise to develop the higher and nobler instincts of one's nature, to bring one to a full realization of his obligations not only to himself but to others also. In truth, the breadth of the business is calculated to make a man broad, and therefore better, if he will but encourage his power of vision and give play to his finer sensibility. Instead of allowing the rim of the dollar to obscure his horizon, he should betake himself to a moun-

tain top and look out over a fair land that is strewn with gems and adorned with flowers for his enrichment and pleasure if he will only prepare himself for their enjoyment and seek them out.

No, gentle reader, I am not talking about star gazers or rainbow chasers. I have reference to the different phases of the fruit and produce trade. Observe it calmly; it is, indeed, a sublime aggregation. Take the continent for your arena, the great American people for your audience and you have what the business typifies, for it reaches every nook and corner of the country, either directly or indirectly, and touches in some way every man, woman and child. Is not this vast stretch of human interests and activities enough to make one pause? Think of the noble spectacle that would present itself if an eye could sweep over all this great country at a glance and could actually see the thousand and one men employed in growing, shipping and selling the stupendous annual supplies of apples, peaches, oranges, potatoes, onions, cabbage, poultry, eggs, butter, etc. that must be had to provide our great nation with a hundred and one produce article to keep the big machine going!

Who can doubt my doctrine that the great produce game should inspire patriotism? Not so much a patriotism that ends with one's board fence or with one's state lines, but the kind that spreads out like the object of its inspiration and takes in the whole country.

The men who have done most for the betterment of trade conditions have been of the class that has taken the broader views of affairs. In other words, their business policy and their patriotism have not been of a narrow or contracted nature. It is unnecessary, I presume to distinguish between the "hollow horn" brand of agitation to which the trade has been subjected now and then, and the vital influences that do good things and keep on doing, thus changing the current of events for the better. Some men have yet to learn that a brass band and a double column story on the first page in the newspapers is not a necessary adjunct of a progressive measure designed for the general uplift of the trade. The reaction following a concert of clamor where some foxy individual is looking for a little free advertising often leaves matters in worse shape than before the would-be reformer began his crusade.

It is scarcely worth while to mention the names of certain men who have done a real service to their country by opening up new fields in the produce business, and who have devised new and improved methods of handling a large part of the nation's food stuffs, men who have blazed into a new empire as it were, and who have been the pioneers in proclaiming a newer and better order of things. As a general rule these men have been substantially rewarded in a business way, but I submit there



**"SMUDGING" OR FROST PREVENTION IN COLORADO—POTS ARE FILLED WITH COAL AND  
FIRES ARE KEPT BURNING WHEN SPRING WEATHER IS THREATENING**



are many uncrowned heroes of commercial triumphs, and men whose praises are as yet unsung for good work done in the agricultural and horticultural realms, and whose thought and effort were essential to the present advanced stage of development of the industry under treatment.

Taken altogether it is true that the produce trade has contributed its quota of good citizens to our body politic. Numbers of men have left the ranks of the trade to fill posts of honor of various kinds, and I am confident that a larger proportion of leaders in different lines in the future will come from the produce field than has been true in the past. I say this in all candor, for I feel that there is as fine human material, when measured after any standard, among produce people as can be found in any other line of business today.

Moreover, the tenets of a new faith have been proclaimed. The gospel of service has superseded the creed of selfishness and asceticism among the past generation of the trade. Broader thinking and keener sensibility have opened the way for more extended action with larger and more satisfactory returns.

Co-operation based on a broad, patriotic sympathy is some day to be the touchstone of true success. Time and space are almost annihilated in the produce realm today. Sectional lines and political borders have been nearly obliterated in the new order of things. And as the light gradually breaks over the range the greed for gold loses part of its sinister charm that lulls men's higher natures into a stupor, and makes them slaves or demons or both.

You say this looks nice on paper, but is it true? Is it true? If it does not assume at least an air of truth to you, if you are in the trade, let me advise a little introspection. Examine yourself. Are you standing in the way of a better order of things in the great produce trade? Have you done your full duty to others in the trade as well as to yourself?

Has the sum total of your efforts been a help or a hindrance to the modern uplift and onward movement? Where and how do you stand anyway? What is your number? Do you really know your place? Maybe you are a soldier in the wrong camp? There are some who would be more of a credit to the trade outside than inside the real produce vanguard. Are you one of these? If so, on behalf of the better element that must and will soon predominate in produce circles, I extend you a cordial invitation to brush up and brush out your pessimism, narrowness and possible wrongdoing; get in line for a better era, or else get out of line and the further you go the better, for it will not be always before your doxology is sung, and your obituary will have been duly recorded.



The reforms that have extended through the different branches of the this business will never go backward, but forward always; the morale of the trade will never go down, but up. Those of us who survive a few years longer may expect to see more reforms, more changes, more improvements and better people who will administer the affairs pertaining to this great business. The right kind of moral fibre, the right kind of muscle and the right kind of judgment will be the combination that calls for a premium in the produce field, and this premium should be good for passage anywhere like the coin of the realm.

Let us hope the time is not far distant when the trade will come into its own in honesty, influence and wealth, and in possession of all other desirable things merited. The opportunity is open for great achievements. I for one expect the right men will come forward and perform commercial feats little short of miracles when measured by past accomplishments.

I hazard my reputation as a prophet on the prediction that in the future the men who will astound the trade with their accomplishments will be genuine patriots who delight in the progress and prosperity of others as well as take honest pride in their own successes.

Verily, to be a good produce man is to be a good patriot in all that the word implies.

## CHAPTER XX

### AN APPEAL FOR EQUAL AND EXACT JUSTICE

If the chapters that have gone before can be said to have any positive influence the gist of what I have set out must be summed up as having an overwhelming bearing in favor of what is just and right in the conduct of trade affairs.

However, I desire to make a further appeal for that equal and exact justice between man and man that must prevail before the produce business can be said to be anywhere near the ideal state we so much desire, and to secure which many trade organizations have been formed from time to time.

Already enough has been said about the difficulty to determine sometimes what is exactly right, and I hope sufficient remarks have been made to show that the average individual can usually find out what is right if he wants to do so. I think fully nine-tenths of the devilment and trickery in the trade is premeditated and fully understood by those who walk in the secret places, and who delight to tarry in the shady nooks and corners. As it was said in olden time, such people prefer darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, at least those who so delight to sport now and then with the shadows on the wall.

Aside from the contingent in the trade whose conscience may be seared, whose judgment is warped by chronic crookedness and whose very moral fibre is punctured by exposure to frequent big or little acts of wrong doing, there is another class who might be designated the "near honest" crowd who aim at sparing their conscience, if you please, but always count on getting the best end of every deal. In other words, they want other people always to assume losses if there must be losses and let them, the "near honest," have the profits. They are better arithmeticians than christians. They want the benefit of every doubt, and are usually fond of basking in the limelight of trade, if not popular favor, like the Pharisees of old. It is with this "law honest" bunch that I have special concern in this chapter.

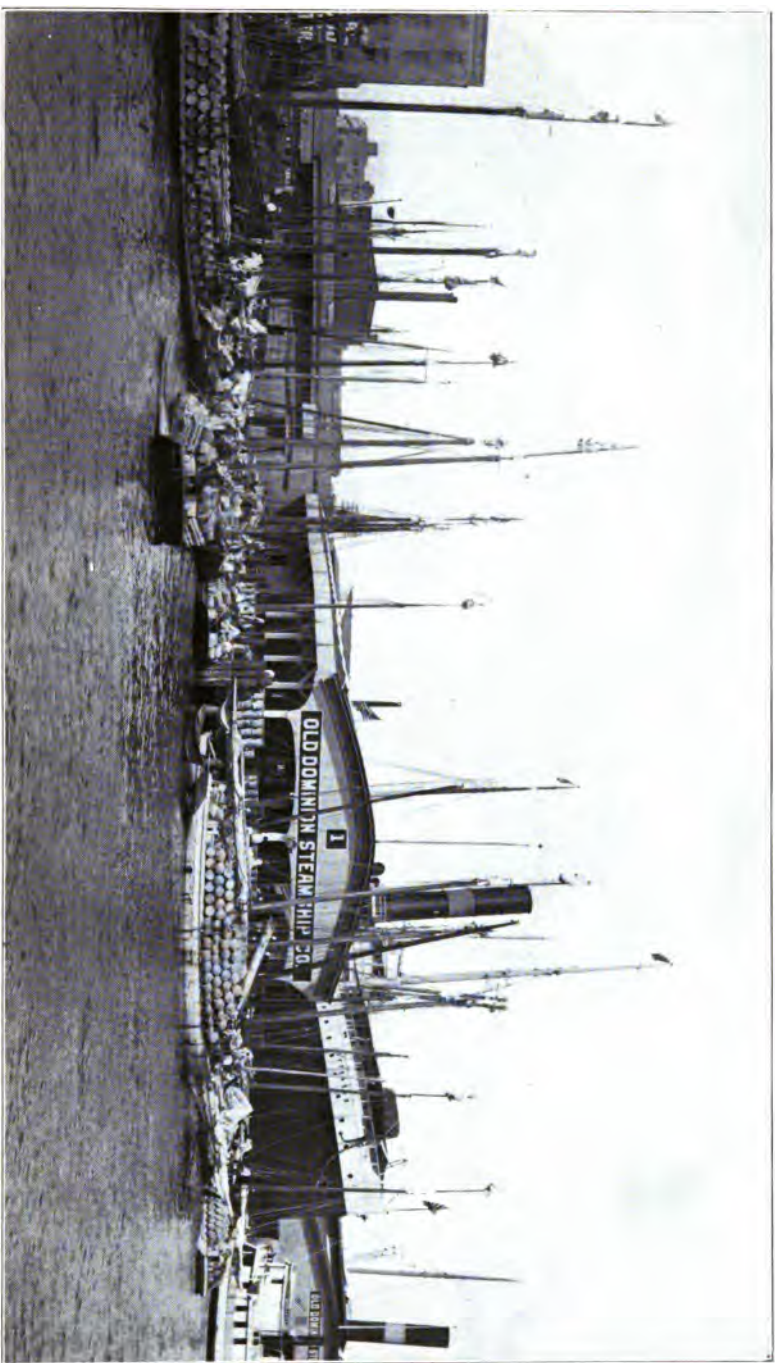
It is painfully true that with some firms and individuals in the trade a deal must always be a "jug handle" affair. Perhaps I should add that these fellows are in a minority, although they are far too numerous.

They all do not march under one banner, nor are they all in one branch of the trade. Here and there we run across them like snags or shoals in a great watercourse, and where the effect of such impediments seems to be mainly to aggravate navigation and hinder commerce. Possibly they have a purpose in the scheme of affairs, but I fancy they would have a hard job to give an excuse for clogging the wheels of honest dealing. And I doubt if their existence were put to the test of pure logic they could show cause why they should not be put out of business, that is, when judged after proper trade standards.

In that era devoutly to be wished for, when equal and exact justice shall prevail and govern the trade, it may become a reality and not an idle dream that all men will be honest. The system so long in vogue whereby too much has been predicated upon the ipse dixit of the commission merchant seems to be ready for a radical shakeup. Certainly it is to be deplored that so many violations of confidence have resulted from the old consignment system which is pretty from a theoretical standpoint, but which fails sometimes in practice because there is something wrong with the men chosen to execute the details in operating the system. As stated previously I have no serious fault to find with the consignment method as such, but its misuse has made many crooks and semi-crooks all along the line. It is merely a question of having an opportunity for some people to do crooked business.

No legal net has ever been woven with meshes small enough to catch the little crooks, and at the same time strong enough to hold the big crooks. A golden rule to measure produce people, I fear, would need to be encased in steel when applied to the rough spots in certain places. Too often a produce deal is a game played with loaded dice, or a deck with marked aces. So many shakes are allowed all around; the deal looks to be a square one. But to those who are sufficiently versed to be what is technically termed "on to the game," it is plain there can only be one result in the round up. It is no more difficult to get trimmed any day in almost any produce market than the raw sucker used to find in a far western mining camp when he expected to play a sure thing and make a big killing or break the bank.

Now, I hope no one will be so rash as to accuse me of trying to slander the produce trade as a whole, for that is far from my purpose, and every reasonable person must so decide if he has perused even casually what I have said in the foregoing chapters. My aim is to



SHIPPING VIRGINIA POTATOES FROM NORFOLK



A PRUNE PACKING CREW AT MILTON, OREGON

make a fervent plea for the kind of justice we all want or should want if we hope to see the business put on the right basis, and I take it that none but a few crooks will raise a howl, and dub me a sensational reformer for taking the firm stand that there are abuses and evils that must be regulated and remedied before the era we have in mind can ever be ushered in.

All friction cannot be eliminated from the produce business, it is true, but if every man would make it a part of his daily study to see that he does what is right and only what is right, I am absolutely sure it would make for the happiness and profit of the individual as well as the trade at large. What a delightful pastime it would be to handle fruits and produce if all men in the trade were honest! That would insure the equal and exact justice we are talking about. Profits under such a system might not be so large in some deals but they would be much more regular and certain. To say the least, profits would be honest, and when losses had to be met, as they always must be, they would be honest losses and could be assumed with a better grace than at the present time when every other fellow seems to feel he is skinned when he meets a loss.

Honesty presupposes moral stamina; justice is predicated upon a modicum of intelligence. Justice, whether measured through the legal sieve or not, should mix readily into the dough of honesty and make a good loaf, biscuit or bun. Another definition for honesty might be justice. Neither is possible without the other, and I think it would be a long step in the direction of improved trade conditions if everybody in the trade could realize fully the truth of this fact. Plain honesty may sometimes go a step beyond what cut and dried justice requires, but not often are the two at variance. Men sometimes get the mistaken idea that to be honest they would go broke. Such specious argument is advanced as "our dishonest competitors would get all the trade," and "we must abide by trade customs; if they are wrong we cannot help it," and "life is too short to waste time trying to remedy evils that are of long standing and so widespread." Only physical weaklings or moral degenerates can share such opinions. He is a curse to the trade who does not assume responsibility for standards and ideals that are found among the people who make up the body of which he is a part.

However insignificant a wrong may appear it may become disastrous to somebody in its ultimate effect. Loose honesty seems to have become widespread among the trade long ago, presumably because it was fashionable. Sentiment rules strong. When men get higher ideals they have better ideas. Honesty is not entirely a subjective condition, and justice is not purely an ethical theory. They have their real application in

everyday life. Both are arrived at by mental processes. How important then that men's minds be set right! This is why I urge that it is part of the bounden duty of everybody in the trade to uplift and uphold trade ideals. This can be done, if you please, without making the whole trade a race of professional "butinskis." But when opportunity offers the wrong should be roundly condemned; the right should be as soundly commended, and if necessary, courageously and effectively defended.

I submit that it is or should be a duty that devolves upon everyone to use his best efforts to not only weed out confirmed crooks in the trade, but also to do his best to array himself against any and all customs which put a price on good behavior, to foster and protect the man who is being made the victim of a ruthless and sinister practice; and at all times to deal a telling blow to any bad behavior, although it may have the sanction of long usage and may have been winked at by an ultra respectable set, possessing the outward guise of piety, but withal foul to the core.

There are evils and systematic errors of which I may not speak. It would be of little worth to try to enumerate them all. Principle is the main thing, and it is with principles we are chiefly concerned. Suffice it to say concerted action among the better element, which certainly predominates in the trade, would go a long way towards securing justice that would inspire confidence and remedy evils as nothing else can.

But how can we get concerted action? By having everyone wait for someone else to take the initiative? Hardly. Every man should appoint himself a committee of one to see that no time is lost to inaugurate good reforms to regulate and purify business in his respective line. Those fearless and honest enough would doubtless make rapid progress on their own account, and meet positive encouragement on the part of others if the proper spirit permeated the entire trade. Righteousness is contagious when its potency is understood and when men realize there is a reward in doing right over and beyond the sum of a few paltry dollars.

Very nice, you say, but will this era of equal and exact justice ever come about even through a long process of evolution? From what I have said heretofore it will be unnecessary to dwell on my answer. I hope the time is not far off when we shall see the fruits of labors spent in the direction of better trade ideals and better men in the business. I verily believe as time goes on we shall find more men have been good than bad, and that equal and exact justice is becoming popular and profitable. I shall offer some further argument on this subject in a later chapter.

In conclusion, I want to say that the produce public is as good as the

people make it. That is self evident. To advance the standards of the business, it is essential that the individuals be reached and transformed where transformation is necessary. Where it is not necessary the individual must be reached, and his support and sympathy enlisted in the cause of justice to everybody in the trade and out of it. The individual can be reached best by the evangels that cry out in the still watches of the night. Their voices may be feeble at first, but they will be heard. It is first a case of conscience. Exercise your higher sensibilities. Get right and tell others. It will be an easy matter to stick when others do.

I shall lay down no new laws, nor proclaim any new philosophy. Justice is positive, practical and profitable, especially if exact and universal in its application. But justice can never be found in a crucible nor reduced to a mathematical formula. Withal, it is simple in most cases where produce details are involved, and those who have no acquaintance with justice can probably get an introduction from their next door neighbors. When justice is perverse and elusive, as it sometimes must be, it can generally be found out by arbitration. But usually the unadulterated brand can be arrived at by the individual who has an honest heart, a moment's leisure and the right disposition.

When the day of equal and exact justice comes, then and not until then can produce affairs move with the swiftness, certainty, pleasure and profit that I believe was intended by a beneficent Creator. As we should await the millennium in spiritual affairs, as we are duly commanded, so should we aid the approach of the time when produce people will find it is easy for everybody to do right all the time as for some to do wrong in small or large affairs, some always, some only now and then. Justice must ultimately predominate here or hereafter. Slowly but surely there are unmistakable signs springing up from time to time which prove that the great principles of justice and honesty are being better understood and more generally accepted by the trade everywhere.

The produce millennium is not yet, but it is certainly in process of evolution. Those who are so fortunate as to live a few years more may expect to see some real wonders as the upward movement progresses.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE WIZARDS AT WORK

The fruit and produce business either from the growing or marketing standpoint can hardly be said to be allied to the black arts; yet it seems there are wizards at work effecting changes from time to time, and securing results that make one question the statement that the day of miracles is past.

It is true that things we are accustomed to from day to day after awhile seem trite. Only outsiders can appreciate the wonders that are being worked out in the great produce field every season, and which frequently fall little short of being magical because of their intricacy and immensity. Imagine if you can the far reaching effect on humanity wrought by horticultural wizards like Burbank and others whose lives are wound up in producing and developing new and better varieties of fruits and flowers, and think also what the ultimate effect of such a life is on trade affairs at large.

First, the horticultural wizard, if we may call him such, develops a new variety, then other wizards set about to make perfect what the first wizard seemed to have only dreamt. The final realization comes when the general public is reached and blessed by having better fruits or products of various kinds and more of them for less money.

What infinite labor and what marvellous intellects have been necessary through the long series of years to take the few primitive fruits and vegetables supplied in the scant storehouse of nature, and develop the almost perfect strains we find today! It would, indeed, be futile for me to attempt to form an estimate of the great men who have made present conditions in the fruit and produce business what they are. It is a long story and doubtless antedates even the discovery of this continent, for we must recollect that present day progress in all lines, though seemingly modern out and out, has its counterpart in olden times even before the discovery of gunpowder or the mariner's compass.

But there are wizards at work aside from the horticultural end of the produce business. We may not stop to think what a wonderful thing it is that present trade conditions have well nigh obliterated the times for the annual seasons as they were formerly known. To have luscious strawberries in northern markets in the winter time is a triumph that ought to rank, at least in point of uniqueness, with the invention of wireless telegraphy or the discovery of X rays. They all show progress, and all progress must be correlated.

However, the example of the berries just cited might be varied indefinitely with other articles under different circumstances. It is not so much a wonder to have fruits and produce out of season as there is wonder in the distribution of all kinds of produce over this broad country in season, for as we have already noted the term season has become so elastic as to stretch almost from January to December.

The application of refrigeration to the handling of produce has transformed some lines so completely as to necessitate an entire revision of trade customs. In the memory of many men in the trade they recollect the time when there was no such thing as a storage egg or a tub of storage butter. What do we find today? The change compares favorably with stories we read about in Arabian Nights and the fairy books.

There are still other feats in handling produce, however, that must challenge our admiration, and we must look closely to see the real wonders, for they are so frequent as to appear trite and commonplace.

Nothing could possess more to move one to imagine himself in fairyland than to take a glance over a big market place in the early morning hours when thousands and thousands of parcels and packages of fruits, vegetables and other kinds of produce are put on sale and begin the last lap of their jaunt from the producer to the consumer.

Here in the market, whether it be the street, the wharf, or on the track, all is bustle and excitement. Buyers are quick to act; sellers are anxious, and it seems as if the very atmosphere is charged with energy that makes things go and go in a hurry. What is most singular, those who are mixed up in the great drama are often unable to realize fully what is taking place around them. Presumably it is much the same as the feeling of the seasoned soldier who becomes so inured to hardships and danger as to be reckless of his life when he goes into battle, and scarcely to realize that men are being mowed down all around him.

I was on the "street" of one of the largest markets in the country one morning and I found myself tied up in a jam on the sidewalk where there was a mass of trucks, buyers, salesmen and packages of goods. I leaned casually against the wall to allow a heavily laden

truck to pass, and incidentally spoke to a veteran salesman standing carelessly in front of the store where he worked, puffing away at his pipe.

"Business must be good," I remarked. "Good? I should say not," he tauntingly replied. "Business is rotten. Yesterday was the day for business. I got down at half past four o'clock and the buyers were hungry for stuff. I'm the apple man, you see. When I have got the goods and the buyers are out in full force, ready to trade I would like to be a twin brother to myself so I could do business fast enough. Say, yesterday I sat out early and worked until about nine o'clock, and sold close to \$5,000 worth, and if I could have been in two places at one time I would have nearly doubled the sales, I believe."

"Well," said I, "you seem to be doing some business again today."

"Here it's nearly noon and I have sold only a few hundred dollars worth to a gang of pikers today. It makes me want to go hang myself to hear you talk about business being good! There's simply nothing doing today."

I had got a severe set back in my ideas about the status of the market, but the jam had broken up—as all street jams must—so I sauntered along my way.

Presently a dapper little red-haired man I knew darted up from a butter room in a big basement, and charged down towards me as if he were running to catch a train.

"Hello! you move like there is a fire in your butter rooms, and you were going to turn in an alarm," I remarked as I shook hands with this salesman, whom I had known for years.

"Nothing like that," he said catching his breath. "I have simply broken all records this morning selling butter. Have begun on the last thousand and to make \$8,000 worth we have worked out today. Am going up to tell the boss and ask for a raise in my salary. Business is the best I ever saw. Haven't had time to get a bite to eat. But it's great business, great business!"

With this recitation I was nonplussed. The little salesman passed on and so did I, and I was led to wonder if there is not an application to the produce business of that old proverb about every dog having his day.

In the course of fifteen minutes I had the words of two expert salesmen about conditions on the street. One had a great run the day before, but there was nothing doing today, while the other pronounced business "great" and had broken all records for his house. Could it be that both of these men were right? Yes, so far as they were individually concerned, there is no doubt but each had told the truth as he saw it. They were selling different lines of stock, but were near neighbors. It is



A NORTHERN MINNESOTA CELERY FARM



THE "LINE UP" OF STRAWBERRY SHIPPERS AT INDEPENDENCE, LOUISIANA



just such occurrences as these that go to make a market place a wonder. Even the folks next door hardly have an idea what is taking place when someone else makes a killing.

A record day or a record sale is something to be proud of. But they are being made every day. New records must eclipse all former deals. It takes these quasi-wizards to make them. They must have that which makes them differ from other records. They are all wonderful, and the men who make them are really wizards if we give them full credit for what they do and consider what it means to accomplish the results they do.

But the real wizards in the produce game are the men who fix up the plans and formulate campaigns that call for records. It is another case where the architect must be given credit instead of the builder.

I have seen a wizard set down, and figuratively speaking, place every market in the country at his mercy so far as a certain commodity was concerned. He was not operating so much directly as indirectly, for he had enlisted the co-operation of others in his plans to control the situation. The market responded as he had intended; soon there was a flow of telegrams and letters that would be worth going miles to see. Car lots were hurrying here and there like shoppers thronging a thoroughfare. They were despatched as had been anticipated, and there were profits following the perfect plans that would almost produce heart failure among the uninitiated. It was another case of a veritable magician in the produce field, for the results were no less wonderful than we see on the stage when some juggler astounds us with sleight-of-hand tricks that look as if the days of miracles are not only not passed, but only just begun. Of course, the tricks of the juggler are only tricks, and not real things like the produce wizards perform.

And so these wizards in the great produce game are often quite commonplace as we are accustomed to look at them, but usually a little elbow touch with them and a bit of sober reflection on our part will serve to convince us that wonderful things are happening in different branches of the business daily which are due to carefully outlined plans that seem to have all the earmarks of genius.

Whether our wizards be in the orchard or field, in store or office, they are wonders nevertheless. You can hardly claim a bowing acquaintance with the produce public if you do not know a score or more of real wizards, not crooks who propose great things, but upright, energetic people who accomplish wonders if we pause and reflect upon what they are doing.

I cannot refrain from the observation that any man of ordinary intelli-

gence must admit that produce wizards are a godsend to the line of business in which they are engaged. Most of them would have made a startling success in any other line of business they might have taken up, for they seem to possess a rare talisman that enables them to command the mountains to stand forth and the mountains obey.

It is worth while for everyone to consider the work of men who have a knack of doing common things in uncommon ways. There are lots of them in the trade, but if their number could be increased two-fold it would be an everlasting blessing to the produce business.

After we reflect upon the success of some men we know it seems clear how they climbed up as they have. Careful preparation, close study of their business, taking advantage of conditions instead of individuals, and beyond everything else, hard work will most likely explain the sum total of the astounding success of the more conspicuous examples of successful produce men.

## CHAPTER XXII

### BETTER DAYS AHEAD

People engaged in any and all branches of the produce business should be optimists. They should be given up to that philosophy which best enables them to bear their burdens, and endure their troubles with a tranquil spirit accompanied with a smile that shows they always hope for the best, and exhibiting that faith in the divine plan of the universe which expects all things will come out right in the end.

Of course, I am not suggesting the building of air castles or laying foundations on sand. What I am trying to do is to establish the expediency of good cheer and a uniform, collective effort for the betterment of trade affairs. By far the majority of our troubles and problems are purely mental. Forsooth, the physical world shapes itself after the mental even as the clay is shaped by the potter's hand. Once the produce public gets to thinking right it will be a great surprise how many fancied ills will take their flight into the realm of forgetfulness.

But, of course, there are many real problems before the trade which we have pointed out in preceding chapters that will hardly yield to "mental treatment." Some of these problems will likely have to be passed on to the next generation, but those who are in position to make a faithful, intelligent effort at improving conditions should feel disgraced in the eyes of posterity if their plain duty is shirked in trying to bring about better days ahead.

Just what should be done and how, is, in some cases at least, a difficult matter to determine. Trade conditions should be compared with conditions in years gone by. What has developed progress and brought about improvements heretofore may be regarded as examples for future changes.

In some measure, I believe, the system on which the produce business will be conducted in the future will be somewhat automatically developed. Certain changes, of course, can only come from sheer force of conditions; certain evils will have to be eliminated in the crucible if not abated



otherwise, as some men seem slow to yield except to the fire test, making a hard and fast nuisance of themselves longer than would seem possible. However, every year sees more and more of the undesirable specimens weeded out of the produce trade. But it seems to me that bad methods and worse men are certainly decreasing compared with the past. Time alone can regulate such matters, and time works changes automatically.

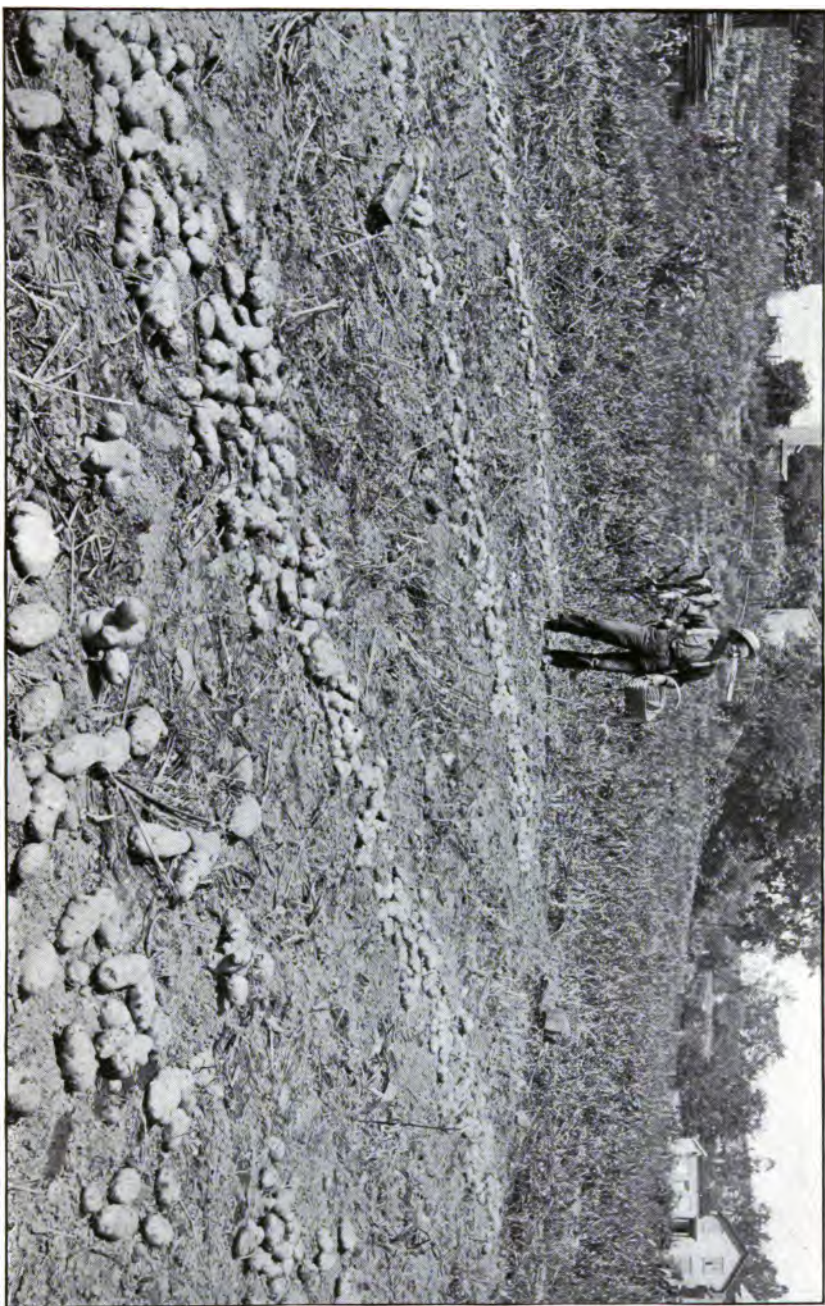
Because certain reforms move slowly men appear to get out of patience with them sometimes. This should not be so. All improvements cannot be wrought in a day. It often takes time and infinite pains to make even a slight change where a remedy is desired for an evil, or where an improved method is to be substituted for one that is clumsy and antiquated. Some things can be hastened and some others cannot. The sun has a certain time to rise and set, and the seasons must change at stated intervals.

Produce is closely related to the rising and setting of the sun, and the recurrence of the seasons cuts a great figure in developing and handling of this line. Therefore, insofar as produce is intermingled with the clock-work of the universe we can feel assured there are some things which will have to be changed slowly, if at all, for the best.

Still, it is not too much to expect man, in his onward march extending control over the domain of nature, to evolve many wonders in the course of a few years that will probably exert some far reaching influences upon certain features of the produce business that have long been regarded as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians. A point in mind is the application of refrigeration to the produce field. What a marvelous change this one invention has brought about can hardly be appreciated without careful investigation.

One thing sure is that the chief requisite of progress is for men everywhere to abandon narrow views and wrong methods in business. There have been so many examples of the fact that men gain more from conducting business on a broad gauge plan than from trying to operate after purely selfish methods, I deem it unnecessary to take up time showing wherein the firm or individual gains more in the long run by doing business on a live and let live policy, than by trying "to hog" everything in sight.

Those in the produce trade who fail to recognize the modern spirit of co-operation, and who are not alive to the higher philosophy of fraternalism, are out of their sphere, and will sooner or later be forced out of the van guard that is found marching onward and upward to the goal of progress, and they certainly will be lost from the phalanx that will achieve the highest success in the future.



POTATO HARVEST IN THE FALL IN NEW YORK STATE—OBSERVE THE HEAVY YIELD AND  
WELL FORMED STOCK



**TOKAY GRAPES, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**



All lines of human endeavor have been affected by the wave of reform and the moral awakening that has spread over the country like wild fire the past few years, yet among people in the trade there are those who are disposed to lament certain changes that stern conditions have dictated. Such people are not unlike old King Canute who was so unsophisticated as to believe he could sweep back the waves of the sea with his broom.

Changes are destined to come, and let us be fair enough to admit that most of these changes are in the nature of needed reforms, and that as a general rule they make for the betterment of the trade everywhere. The sensible thing for men to do when they find themselves face to face with changes that are inevitable, is to adjust themselves to such things as must come with the changes. I fear that certain men in some quarters have done themselves and their fellows irreparable harm by trying to oppose genuine progress. Now and then we find a man who knows the world moves, but who apparently refuses to move himself. There is a touch of pathos in contemplating such a case in the produce trade or in any other line of business.

Certainly there are abundant reasons to hope for better days ahead in the produce business. All business is based on confidence. Men are learning to trust one another more than in years gone by, and the exercise of trust under proper safeguards always acts as a stimulus to honest dealing. The complex relations we find in the scheme of produce dealing today necessitates confidence between man and man. There are lots of cases, of course, where confidence is misplaced and losses follow. But what do we find in all other lines? Identically the same. Just because there may be more cases of misplaced confidence than heretofore might be attributed to the fact that there are so many more opportunities, yea, necessities for reposing confidence in others.

Despite certain opinions to the contrary, the majority of people in the produce trade want to be honest, and if they are given proper encouragement they will not wilfully violate a trust. He who is heard to be constantly lambasting the trade for its moral shortcomings and lamenting the fact that so many rogues are identified with the produce business, will bear a little watching himself. From actual observation I am forced to the conclusion that those who sometimes cry out the longest and loudest against the whole trade as a race of crooks are themselves worse crooks than the people they assail.

It means a great deal for a plaintiff to go into court with clean hands. "He is thrice armed who hath his quarrel just," is an ancient precept that has not suffered with age. Only those who are honest themselves

can hope to wield a positive influence for good in effecting reforms and bringing about desired changes in the produce game that will put the business on a surer, safer and more profitable basis.

Man in his individual capacity amounts to little nowadays. It is imperative that any and all organizations, looking to the betterment of trade conditions, should hold this fact constantly in mind. No body of men can ultimately succeed even in their organized capacity who champion a wrong, or who hope to make bad men good after a kind of hocus pocus process. Mere numbers count for little or nothing. Haste to spread a propaganda is liable to enlist certain types that ultimately thwart the basic motives on which the enterprise is founded.

The right kind of co-operation can accomplish wonders, and the wrong kind can also do wonderful harm. But too much cannot be expected of co-operation even in this age when the theory itself is in danger of being worked to death. Let every man in the trade endeavor to promote confidence by being honest himself; let him try to show others he is not after more than his legitimate gain, that he hopes others will reap the same degree of success he aims to achieve for himself, knowing there is plenty to go around for everybody if it is correctly distributed and properly treated. Above all let him have the spirit that not only is willing to live and let live, but which desires to help the other fellow to live, and if no help is to be rendered, the constant resolution shall prevail to at least throw nothing in the way of a struggling fellow in the trade.

How many men in the trade can truthfully say they are actuated by this spirit? It is certainly good gospel, isn't it? It makes for happiness, for the best way to be happy yourself is to make someone else happy. I am sorry that the converse of this is also true. We shall see not only a more pleasant, but a more prosperous business in handling fruits and produce when men cease to be narrow and selfish.

The trade is growing better I know, but if I can hasten its progress a bit in the right direction, I shall feel amply rewarded for my work in this volume. The progress may be slow, but it is sure. What is right must prevail.

Kingdoms rise and fall; civilizations perish; men come and go, but principles are eternal. It is about the inexorable principle that shines forth in the characters of men that I am talking.

I am sure that the right principles are gradually forcing their way to the top. It may take a crow bar here and there,—a jack screw now and then, and maybe an augur to get through, but in the end the right lands on top and goes on triumphant.

Yes, I admit this is all more or less general and possibly didactic. But

what does that matter? It is impossible to be specific, and point out what reforms, changes or plans are necessary to bring about the better days ahead we have in mind. But who can deny that my prescription is not the correct remedy as far as the symptoms are indicated? There may be complications to be sure, but the remedy I have suggested will surely go a long way in bringing relief of the troubles that have stood in the way of real progress as trade conditions present themselves to me.

Let us hope that there are better days ahead, and that our generation may be able to realize that changes for the good have come, and that the trade is always just as good or as bad as the people who make up the trade want it to be. When we earnestly desire and work for better days they will come as if by magic.

I believe they are near at hand, too.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PUBLIC ESTIMATE OF THE TRADE SHOULD BE REVISED AND CORRECTED

Doubtless all fairly intelligent people connected in one way or another with the produce business must realize the importance of having the trade appear in as good light as possible before the general public.

Now and then we hear some such expression among people who should be more enlightened or charitable as "Oh, he is only a produce man" or "He is just a fruit dealer" or worse still "He is one of those tricky commission merchants" or of a horticultural meeting "they're a bunch of rubes."

Those in the trade who have a modicum of self respect, and who are aware of the actual importance of the fruit and produce business should enter a polite, but firm protest against such sentiments, which are far more incisive than can be conveyed by the actual language used. Sentiments of this kind have become far too numerous for the produce people to pass them unheeded. Manifestly, the general run of individuals have no definite idea of the produce business, except they get it from the corner fruit stand or from the huckster who perhaps disturbs their morning slumbers crying his wares to the clanking of a dinner bell, which, most likely is pitched in precisely the right key to provoke one's temper to the utmost.

That any one of a dozen different produce commodities involves several million dollars in its handling during a single season would strike many well informed citizens as a statement just a bit exaggerated.

It would sound like a fairy tale to tell even to some "able financiers" that if all the chicken hens throughout the United States were put to laying they could in a comparatively short time produce enough eggs at the ordinary market prices to pay our national debt.

A man who would attempt to figure out the value of all the apples, potatoes, cabbage, onions, bananas, oranges, lemons, poultry, eggs, butter

and the hundred and one kinds of other staple articles that are consumed by the American people, would be considered "bug house," to use a modern curbstone expression, for he would be in the same class with the misguided people trying to work out a solution of perpetual motion. The one task would be about as easy as the other for any man to solve in a lifetime.

But in this connection I want to say that the "produce problem" can be solved if taken hold of properly, and it should be taken hold of by no less an authority than the United States government. Until one applies to the Department of Agriculture for some specific information relative to the annual volume handled, or the value of the total of some one kind of produce, every season like peaches or eggs, one hardly realizes the lack of sentiment in the trade to bring conditions up to date, for it is the invariable rule that no sphere of human activity gets proper recognition at the hands of Uncle Sam until the component parts of the aforesaid "sphere" are sufficiently impressed with their importance to be worthy of, and to demand proper recognition. The Department of Agriculture, like other departments, is very apt to follow the line of least resistance, and this explains why so little live, up-to-date information about the vast importance of produce affairs can be had of Uncle Sam.

It is a severe criticism on the progressive spirit of produce people of all kinds that volumes upon volumes have been written on snakes, bugs, ticks, ants, cliff-dwellers, mound builders, extinct Indian tribes, humming birds, butterflies, etc. etc., ad infinitum, when apparently little or no effort has been made to collect and classify vital statistics relative to the value of some of our leading food products embraced in fruits and produce, and an effort made to keep such information in the realm of reasonable freshness for trade purposes.

We are taught in ponderous tomes issued by Uncle Sam, couched in more or less scientific, Latin verbiage how to raise chickens, etc., but little or no intelligent effort is put forth to collect systematically the market value of the chickens raised in a given year, except possibly when the general census is taken and the report is probably stale and almost worthless for trade purposes before it is available.

Many costly experiments have been made by scientific horticulturists and pomologists employed by the U. S. Agricultural Department to discover and explain the best methods of fruit growing, which is certainly good as far as the policy goes, and should be encouraged and extended. But what is even more essential for the welfare of the fruit growers, produce shippers and the trade generally, is for Uncle Sam to ascertain for example, the exact commercial apple acreage of the country, showing how



much acreage of different varieties is in bearing, age of trees, and their general conditions from year to year.

With some authentic information of this kind in hand, even approximately correct and comparatively recent, it would be of incalculable help to the general public as well as the trade. Not only would it benefit the grower in aiding him to the proper selection of new trees most likely to show a profit etc. but it would also enlighten the dealers and buyers who are "in the dark" half the time as to what apples are really in the country, and what prospects are for the near future with respect to the supply of the several varieties of apples. And apples are merely used for illustration, for what is true of this fruit will apply to nearly all other lines of produce.

Nothing, I insist, would do more to put the produce business on the higher plane on which it should rest than proper treatment of the business by the United States government. Some efforts have been made of late by the Department of Commerce and Labor in the way of practical research into, and the collection of statistical data relating to different produce subjects, but they fail to cover the ground as it should be covered, and must be covered to be of much value.

We are fairly safe in assuming that the government will never give the various subjects proper attention until the demand is made, and, of course, the demand must be insistent,—a kind of emergency call to get an important industry properly regulated and duly recognized so as to be on a basis with mining, stock raising, etc.

Maybe it is no great wonder that the general sentiment relating to the trade is of an indifferent, if not an undesirable sort, since the trade has apparently never seen fit to help foster a better sentiment about itself. It is axiomatic that a man is usually taken by the world at his own price. The same applies to a collection of individuals, for sentiment is more easily generated, fostered, crystallized and expressed by an aggregation of people than by single individuals operating independently, if at all.

I think no prolonged argument is necessary to prove that nothing would have a more salutary and far reaching effect in correcting in the mind of the general public some manifestly erroneous ideas about produce affairs than for Uncle Sam to issue some figures on different phases of the business from time to time, which would not only establish the importance of the produce business along with banking, manufacturing, transportation etc. but would be of great interest and enlightenment to the country at large. Such information would enable the general public to form a more intelligent idea of the probable future cost of food products, which is one of the prime factors in the cost of living,—itself a question

too little studied and understood nowadays with our complex mode of living and peculiar economic problems.

It is needless to point out that such complete, correct information as I have in mind would be of as much, if not more direct benefit to the growers and shippers than to buyers and jobbers, although the benefits would be shared directly and indirectly by everybody in the trade.

That a revised and corrected public sentiment about the trade is highly desirable cannot be doubted for a moment. Think what a difference it would make, for instance, in the matter of loans from banks, if the produce business were generally recognized as being second to none in importance when measured by dollars and cents.

Also, think what a difference it would make in your interest rate and the security often required if you could tell your banker in a few sentences just what the supply is of a given commodity on which you seek a loan to carry your deal through, or if you could submit a table of authentic figures showing the actual volume of and average annual profits in such articles heretofore. As a general rule, bankers are skittish of ventures that lack some substantial element of certainty when a proposition for accommodation comes before them.

If the best informed poultry men or cabbage dealer in the country were asked off hand by his banker why he felt sure the commodity in which he is specially interested is good or bad for an investment, his reply would necessarily be indefinite and probably incorrect at that from an up-to-date business standpoint, which absolutely requires specific data.

We have such a wonderful country, so full of so many different kinds of things that even those who pretend to specialize in one particular thing are totally unable to keep pace with trade matters so as to be reasonably sure of their ground. Then too, a man's judgment is so often badly warped by his own interests. A man may fancy he has learned about all there is in his line that is worth while, and generally when he reaches such a conclusion it is about time for him to retire, for his day of usefulness is well nigh past. The very complexity and enormity of the produce business puts it at once beyond the range of any individual, or association of individuals short of the general government, so far as keeping in touch with the entire country is concerned.

The sooner the trade wakes up to the importance of awakening the general government that it is high time the public and the trade be given the facts, and as nearly the whole of the facts as possible, about the leading articles of fruits and produce in the most up-to-date, authentic fashion, the better it will be for the entire country.

And why not? Our country is rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Every year Congress appropriates funds for nearly every conceivable purpose, running all the way probably from a campaign of warfare requiring our soldiers to shoot ideas of democracy into a lot of half naked orientals, clear through the gamut of expenditures to some subtle astronomical calculations having to do with the probable effect of March winds on the planet Mars.

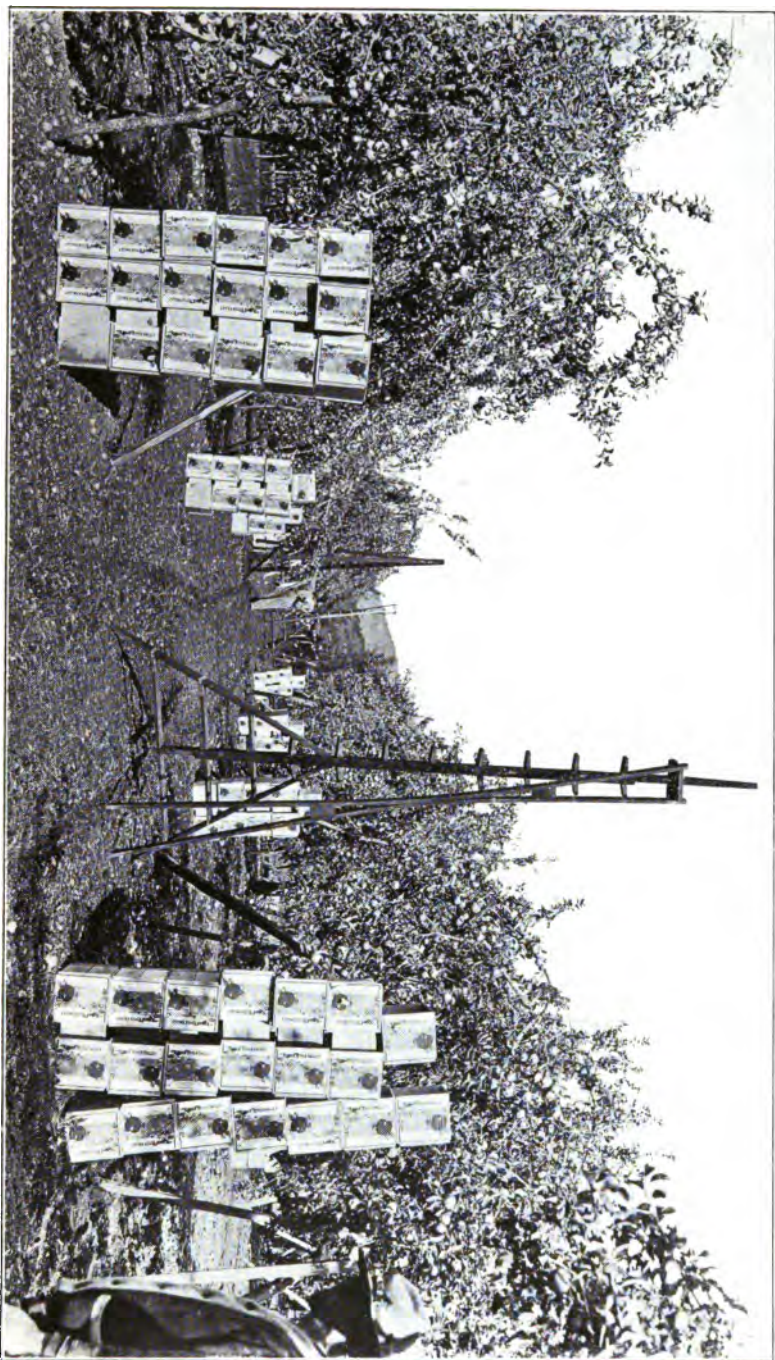
In short, the country spends money like a drunken sailor for providing information about nearly everything else you can mention. Almost every other industry gets proper recognition, but in the case of the different kinds of produce I suppose most of us in the trade have been half afraid we would be called presumptuous upstarts if a request had been made for Uncle Sam to open a general account for the several departments of the fruit and produce business to keep track of the expenditures in trying to help the trade and the public generally to figure out how high the cost of living may go if the business of growing and marketing produce is not made to rest upon more correct data than is now available.

The benefit of such information as the United States government could and should collect and distribute relating to produce affairs every year, must be quite evident, especially when viewed from the standpoint of opening up new territory for marketing various products. At present every firm or every shipper has to go to considerable pains to find out as best they can what different markets require, and how fruits and produce should be prepared and put on the market. Much of the people's time and money must needs be sacrificed in unnecessary experiment of this kind, and hundreds are going ahead making the same old mistakes every year.

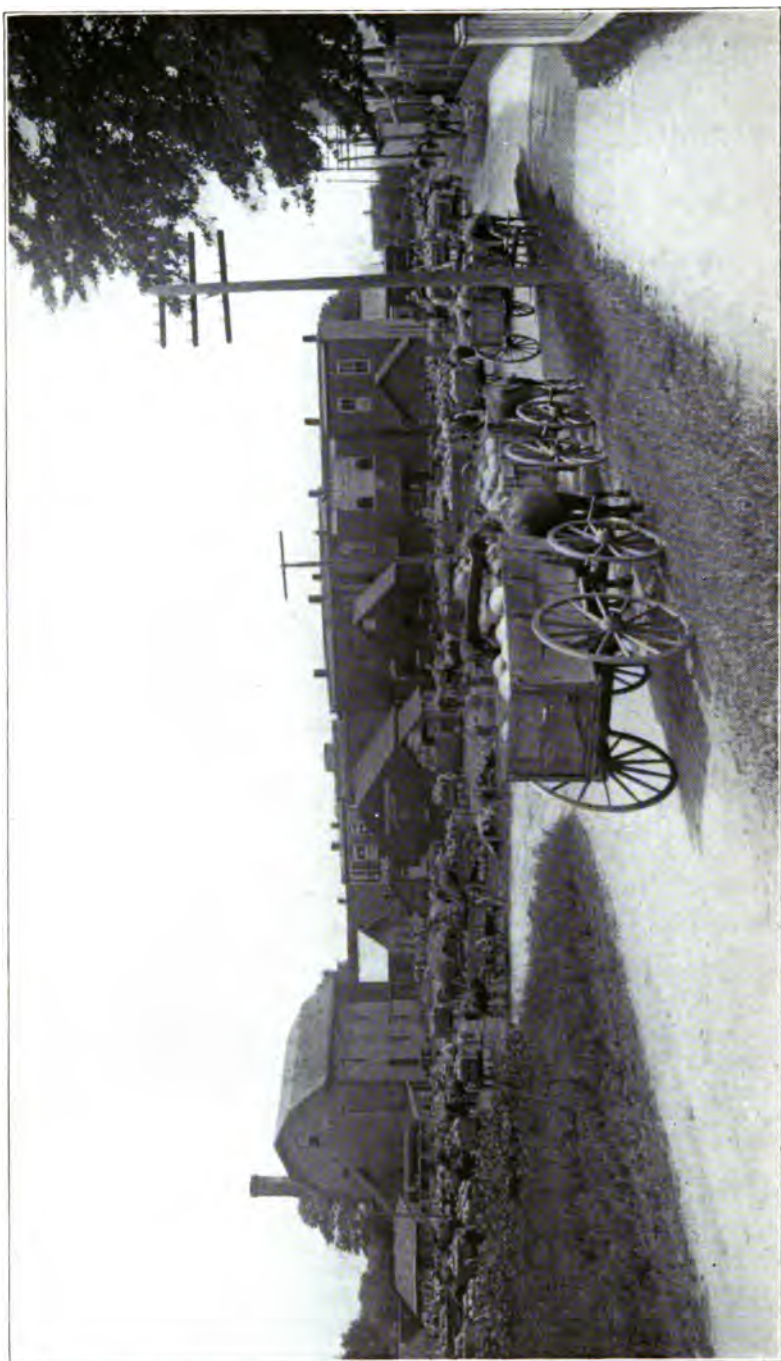
Understand, I am not taking the absurd position that Uncle Sam should be expected to do what is necessary for the individual to perform in transacting his business, but my plea is for the general government to do that which will help the individual or firm to better handle his business, and which assistance in the very nature of the case can be supplied best by the national government.

I am fully aware that I am taking desperate chances at being severely criticised, both by the politicians who may have to explain why they cannot arrange sufficient appropriations to carry out the suggestions I have made, and also by that contingent in the fruit and produce business, who are estimable gentlemen in their way but who resent any intrusion from people out of the trade who are disposed to tamper with things.

As to the politicians who vote the appropriations: they can find the means when the time comes. As to those in the trade who might look



PACKING SCENE AT MEDFORD, OREGON



GROWERS BRINGING IN WATERMELONS AT OAKTOWN, INDIANA

upon the plan for the general government to take some cognizance of produce matters as an "unwarranted assumption," I have only the pity and commiseration we should always entertain for those who are so foolish as to stand in their own light and who apparently aim to keep the light from shining upon others.

Naturally, the necessity for the work to be undertaken by Uncle Sam must be made clear, and the demand must be properly framed and presented. Just what lines should be covered first is hard to say, as there is so much to do that it could only be handled piece by piece. Much of the investigation will be tedious and costly, but the rank and file should be collected and classified with comparative ease and without too much cost.

By all means, at least a beginning should be made by the general government to give proper treatment to the fruit and produce public, and since this industry has been so badly neglected in the past it would seem reasonable that a double portion ought to be forthcoming as a sort of atonement for past treatment of the trade.

Once the truth is known in regard to the extent and importance of the fruit and produce business it is a foregone conclusion that not nearly so many men in the trade will be asked to turn out of the road while some toy magnate or lottery promoter passes by. The business public, as well as the general public, will like produce folks better, and think more kindly of the produce interests when the people in the trade realize the estimate placed upon the business by the larger percentage of the general public is wrong, and it is resolved once for all to have the usual erroneous estimate revised and corrected.

Some action of the nature I have indicated is almost sure to be taken within the near future. The trade has been asleep on this subject for a long while. Now that day is breaking I hope we shall see our people waking up.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### BUTTER

So much has been written on the technical side of butter making and the creamery business generally that the author feels inclined to refrain from any comment whatever on that feature of the butter business, even if he were capable of adding anything new to the subject by undertaking a technical article.

Besides, our concern in this chapter as elsewhere is chiefly with the practical as opposed to the theoretical, and with the marketing instead of the actual growing or manufacturing of different kinds of produce. Therefore, our attention is centered mainly on the handling of butter from the time it leaves the butter maker until it reaches the consumer, which in itself is, indeed, an interesting as well as an intricate subject for investigation and study.

Beyond doubt the butter business is one of the most exact and clean cut of all the various specialties in the produce field. Based on an approximately accurate system of grading by points involving such features as color, body, flavor, salt, package, etc. the expert can score a line and establish a grade with almost the certainty that the assayer determines the commercial value of metallic ores. To the uninitiated a scoring contest looks like a stupid undertaking, for the average person outside the trade seems to be imbued with the idea that "butter is butter."

That the scoring contests held in different sections of the country from time to time are beneficial in an educational way, and that the almost exact system of grading and selling butter in vogue all over the country is the slow outgrowth of many years of careful experimenting, and, therefore, well and logically founded, can hardly be questioned for a moment.

Whatever else may be said of the present scheme of handling butter it remains quite clear that there is much to commend in the system that butter makers and dealers have worked out, and which is in use with only slight modifications everywhere in America. The reasonable exactness in establishing grades enables the trade to buy and sell the va-

rious grades of butter on a basis of their real market value, provided they do not confuse price and value too much.

Among buyers in the leading markets grades are represented for what they actually are, and prices are mostly based on the relative merits of the grades being bought and sold. Creamery firsts or extra firsts could hardly be run out as specials or extras, unless the lines be very fine and the market firm with a scarce supply. In most cases the buyer looks at a line that is represented as specials, extras, extra firsts, firsts, seconds, "packing," etc., and it is merely a question of first, being satisfied as to the quality or the grade, and second, getting buyer and seller together on a price. And if a line is represented and sold at a price, assuming a certain grade of certain quality, and if further inspection of a car lot, for instance, showed the stock to be not up to the grade represented it usually is the case that a second inspection is called for, and a more careful examination is required so as to make sure what is the actual grade and quality of the butter in question.

It should be stated for the benefit of those not familiar with the system of modern butter inspection that even in the inspection of a car lot of about 400 tubs it is generally required that only a certain number of packages, usually running from 10 to 20 tubs be inspected in order to fix the grade and quality of the whole line.

To inspect a tub of butter a "trier," which is a long concave blade, is inserted or bored through the tub from top to bottom or from the side of a "stripped" tub, and a round, peg-like block is taken out and afterwards fitted back into place when the inspector is through with his inspection of the sample,—smelling, tasting, observing the grain, etc.

In handling undergrades such as packing stock, roll butter, dairy butter, etc. it is often the case that a casual inspection is all that is required to show what grade the stock must take, but upon a closer inspection a trier is necessary to go down to see what is in the middle and in the bottom of the package.

But these tests have to do only with the practical side of scoring, and it is necessary to go into chemical analysis to determine the amount of moisture, butter fat, etc. contained in a sample of butter in cases where they must be ascertained.

Of late years a great deal has been heard on the subject of moisture in butter; excessive moisture over the sixteen per cent prescribed by federal regulations has caused the Internal Revenue department to be on the alert, and no little trouble has resulted to those who have been careless in observing the law on this subject.

No one who has followed the butter deal carefully can hesitate in



saying that the effect of existing federal laws relative to moisture has had a salutary effect on the butter trade generally. A few years ago the best buttermaker for the creamery was the one who could carry out most neatly the "irrigating process," and put out the maximum of water with the minimum of butter.

It was plain to see that the end of this sort of business would have to come sooner or later. Not only did the excess moisture put a premium on dishonesty, but it put serious obstacles in the way of an honest man's making a dollar. Dealers who were stocked up heavily found it a hard job to sell "irrigated" lines of stock either in domestic or foreign markets. There is no telling the time, the money and the peace of mind that have been exhausted and wasted trying to move butter that was "doped" up to sell, and those who made it purposely with too much water in it were just as much a swindler as the professional con man whose favorite past-time is found in working off gold bricks on verdant hayseeds.

But the moisture question is still an unsolved problem when viewed from every angle. Opinions vary widely as to just how moisture should be handled in different localities in different seasons. Authorities are a unit, however, that much excess over sixteen per cent is showing more water than is really necessary or desirable, but some maintain that the rigid adherence to the sixteen per cent and less is an unreasonable hardship on the trade. Still it is difficult to see why the law should not be complied with since its object is for the safe guarding and improvement of the butter industry at large, and it looks as if federal authorities mean business when they say the law must be obeyed. There is much less trouble over this moisture question than a few years ago.

Efforts were made a year or two ago by representatives of the Dairy Division of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to procure samples of butter coming on the larger markets, and proceed to collect the tax of ten cents per pound levied on "adulterated" butter if samples showed an excess of moisture. But when the matter was put up squarely before federal authorities at Washington some months ago it was decided that the creamerymen, and not the dealers in the distributing centers, should be held accountable for excess moisture. In the first place, if buyers and distributors should be held to account for moisture it would put them to no end of red tape and useless expense if they should undertake to be sure of the moisture in all stock they might handle. Besides, no analysis except the "official" tests are recognized by Uncle Sam, and it has been argued, therefore, that if government inspection must be had and must be final, that it should take place at the creamery where the butter is made, and the butter maker should be held to account if too much water



**PATRONS DELIVERING CREAM AT A MINNESOTA CREAMERY**



**INTERIOR OF A CREAMERY AT OOSTCAMP, BELGIUM**



CLASS IN DAIRYING AT IOWA UNIVERSITY

is in the butter shipped or sold by his creamery or factory. Undoubtedly this contention is based on sound logic, and it looks as if the policy is to be carried out it must result in a comprehensive system of creamery inspection that will tax to the utmost even Uncle Sam to fully execute the undertaking. But faithful government officials have done a great deal to help the creamerymen in this respect.

One positive benefit coming from government regulation of the moisture question has been to put the butter business on a more sure foundation, for it has enabled the trade to be more certain what a tub of butter shall contain. Of course, there are limitations to the possible benefits that may be reasonably expected from a rigid federal inspection and supervision of the moisture percentage and other matters relating to the industry, but it cannot be successfully denied that any remedy short of the regulations enforced by the federal government will ever be satisfactory and effective. At most, state laws are a joke when it comes to interstate traffic, and it is generally known that by far the larger part of the butter produced in one state is consumed in some other state that cannot possibly exercise control over the manufacture of a commodity made outside its own borders.

Again, there is always some difficulty in having local authorities take proper interest in the enforcement of laws designed to benefit citizens of some other remote section or city. In some states the dairy and food commissioners have rendered themselves very unpopular because they have insisted that creameries, cheese factories, etc. should be kept clean and in a passably sanitary condition. When there is opposition to the efforts of state officers who are disposed to discharge their duty as they see it to the general public, and when petty politics are allowed to intervene to render void the efforts of men trying to promote the principles of real progress, of decency and cleanliness, to say nothing of square business dealings, it looks as if any fair minded man must concede that Uncle Sam has not only the right, but a distinct duty to perform in the butter and cheese field in order to secure clean methods and honest business dealings.

Still it is no more from the standpoint of enforcing proper regulations that the general government should take an interest in the dairy industry, than to lend encouragement for further progress in these branches which have made wonderful strides during the past few years, and which will develop more wonders in the near future if the right campaign is mapped out and followed.

New territory is constantly being opened where profitable dairying can be carried on, and the information as to such essentials as will assist

in getting the industry on its feet, and such help of a general character as may be needed, can be supplied best by and through proper federal influence and assistance.

Our national government has heretofore been fairly liberal with the money appropriated to improve and foster dairying, and much good has been accomplished thereby, both to the industry itself and to the country at large. However, much more money will be necessary to develop the most efficient dairying, and the butter and cheese dealers should assist in keeping this matter prominently before the public, and especially in the minds of those who make up the appropriations,—the United States Senators and Congressmen. The same may be said to apply to state legislators also.

While we have under consideration the butter question from a national standpoint, and the general effects of federal laws on the industry, some comment on oleomargarine, alias butterine, may not be wholly out of place. Undoubtedly, oleo is the *bogey man* of the creamery business. It is the skeleton in the closet that is threatened when little boys are fretful, refuse to go to sleep, and delight to keep people awake late at night.

Oleo is the scapegoat, the square of the circle, the veritable *bete noir* of the butter trade. While the writer knows full well that butterine is always a factor that must be reckoned with, he feels sure that the trade at large has been subject to paroxysms of fear that King Oleo would put people out of business, when there has hardly been cause for serious apprehension. This is especially true since the passage of laws several years ago providing for a tax of ten cents per pound on colored oleo, and a quarter cent tax on the uncolored product.

The author knows he will be criticised for the statement, but he is one of a fairly large number of people in and out of the trade who recognize that there was never a more glaring piece of class legislation in this country than the above mentioned oleo tax. Instead of fixing the tax as it is, a severe penalty should have been provided for those who might be caught selling colored oleo for genuine creamery butter.

Talk about the federal tax on oleo to prevent imposition on the dear public! Bah! What did we see every blessed day in the produce business before the Pure Food law was passed, but a continued round of deception and fraud so far as the general public was concerned?

Butter was sold for "Elgin butter" that probably was never in a thousand miles of Elgin. True enough, it may have been real butter, but the point remains that it was fraudulently represented to be what it was not. Of course, it takes an Elgin butter man to get the full point of

the joke, for he can tell you how somebody was trading on the reputation of his product and coining money on the quality of the "Elgin butter" which he had not.

No little agitation has been heard the past few years on the part of the average consumer for the repeal of the government tax on oleo, because prices have been so high for creamery butter. This is worth bearing in mind and we shall probably have occasion to refer to the subject later on in the course of this chapter, and maybe have it forced upon our unwilling attention eventually outside this work in a way that will compel us to recognize that the public will have its way in the end when a subject of such vital interest is at issue. If oleomargarine is properly put up and sold for just exactly what it is I believe it can do no harm to those who have good stomachs and want to save the difference in price between it and real butter.

The attention of the butter trade all over the country has been called to the question of "premiums" and fictitious quotations the past few years, and it is hoped that the system of handling butter will someday be purged of this evil, for I have no hesitancy in calling it an evil, and also going on record with the statement that anything over or beyond a straight, bona fide price quoted on the actual buying and selling basis in a given market is wrong, and such premiums are a reflection either on the judgment of men responsible for them, or else a severe criticism on the morals of the committees or exchanges that tolerate them.

It is not enough to say that "everybody knows about them, so what is the difference?" That is not the question. It is an issue between right and wrong. In the old graft ridden days of corrupt transportation the so-called freight rebates were "known" by a majority of the large shippers, and it was often asked "What is the difference?" An enlightened public sentiment in this country will not often take time to answer such questions except with a knock-out blow, and I agree that the quicker the blow is administered the better, especially for the public generally, for he that essays to foist a corrupt practice and offer as his excuse the threadbare argument that "everybody knows about it and does it," is a moral reprobate who needs a severe jolt to show him he is a nuisance if not an enemy towards the general public, as well as towards the decent element in the line of business in which he is engaged.

The butter trade will not soon forget the strenuous campaign in New York a few years ago over the legality of fictitious butter quotations, and the scathing arraignment of premiums in the decision rendered by Judge Jaycox in making permanent an injunction against "premiums" will stand as an epoch making event in establishing the fact that a bona fide quotation is the only one worthy of the name.

The opinion of the court that the butter quotation committee of the New York Mercantile Exchange had made quotations "deliberate, wilful, intentional, fraudulent and systematic" stands today as a blot on the escutcheon of that great market, and it should be stated in passing that other large markets have been subject to the same kind of manipulations. Let us hope the time will come when the prices quoted in the leading markets will represent bona fide trading prices.

The better element in the trade has come to realize that it is just as easy to quote the market right as to "muddy the water" with a fictitious "official" price designed rather to conceal than reflect the real market conditions. It may be taken as a sure evidence of corrupt practice in any market where there is a studied effort to establish quotations either above or below the actual buying and selling prices.

Fictitious quotations which have been common from time to time in the past have naturally given rise to gossip about a so-called butter trust. While there have been unmistakable evidences now and then of manipulation in butter prices, it is doubtful if anything like a well defined trust or monopoly has ever been or ever will be successfully formed to control the entire butter business.

In the first place, butter is a commodity that is not capable of being monopolized as we understand trust practice nowadays. An actual monopoly must needs control both the source of supply and the means of distribution. Although there are some enormous concerns operating in the creamery field, resulting from combinations of late years, and which are alleged to have put some small competitors here and there out of business, yet it must be admitted that these same big fellows have their troubles, for they are powerless to deal with certain conditions that arise now and then which make them losers, apparently at their own game. At least, there is a healthy competition among the big creameries in getting milk in different sections of the country. They also find it hard sledding against the small creameries sometimes.

Decidedly, there are too many creameries operating independently of each other to make it possible for any one clique to gain absolute control of the production of butter, and it is a plain case to those who know the game that no man or set of men, however wise, wealthy or influential, can ever hope to dictate indefinitely what the markets shall or shall not do, nor have they anything like complete control over the means of distribution. The proposition is too big and altogether too intricate to make the butter market follow a given course at will. Besides, it would take a pile of money that would stagger the imagination to control butter for a period long enough to make it permanent, and it is certain nobody.

in the produce business has ever yet displayed the rare ability to get together a sufficient sum to handle the entire make of even a single season.

It is easy to see that the speculative nature of butter makes it an uninviting venture among most monied men who seek a safe investment and preferably one that promises a sure return, though that return may be small. Butter is by no means a sure thing so far as profits go. In fact, it often loses money.

When we noted in a former chapter that the entire produce field is, at best, a line in which the speculative element enters largely, we might have cited butter as a good example of this fact. However, butter is perhaps no better and no worse as a speculative proposition than other produce commodities, although butter is at times as sensitive as wheat or stocks, and it has made legions happy or miserable according as they have hit it right or wrong, just as we observe in the grain pit or on the stock exchange.

But it is very doubtful if there are many safer or surer commodities in which to invest on an average nowadays than good No. 1 packing stock when bought in the spring or early summer at the right price, as we have generally seen the supply below the demand for the past several years, and from present indications it will not be in excess of the requirements so as to cause anything like heavy losses in the near future unless some radical change should upset the butter deal in an unexpected way. Many cases are on record the past few years where good packing stock has showed a profit of from ten to twenty-five per cent within ninety days, and any investment which can do this well at making money even half the time must be given credit for possessing many points in its favor.

Of course, when packing stock makes money it is usually true that creamery stock is also making money, but this does not necessarily follow.

Butter has become so much a staple food product these days that men are sometimes trying to take an impossible chance on it as a speculative proposition. When prices are marked too high and business stagnates, butter can easily cause trouble. By expecting too much of the deal, some men precipitate their own undoing by trying to get the uttermost farthing, instead of being willing to take a fair profit and allow someone else to get part of the reward that comes when there is a favorable trend in the market.

After all is said and done it remains clear when butter is looked at purely from a speculative standpoint that it has many advantages when compared closely with some other produce commodities. The one feature that enables holders of butter to "carry it over" in storage until the



second year cannot be said of a number of other articles that claim the attention of speculators in produce. When butter is frozen solid and carried under proper conditions it is difficult to say how long it may be kept in good shape, certainly for 18 or 24 months.

However, it is the usual custom to close out blocks of storage butter before they have been under refrigeration more than a year. Those who follow the game, figure that it is best to clean up before the season is over and begin anew with fresh stock every summer. This, of course, is only good business judgment, for the matter of storage charges, interest on money and increased insurance enter into prospective profits on lots of butter that have been held under refrigeration until the second season or longer, and it should be borne in mind the quality of butter is not improved for the long keeping.

Pursuant to our aim to steer clear of whatever may be of a purely technical nature relating to butter making and the creamery business generally, I feel that I should not purposely deviate at this juncture, but the question of hand separators is one of such widespread interest that I cannot ignore some comment on the subject, although I have no disposition to take up unnecessary time and space handling the matter.

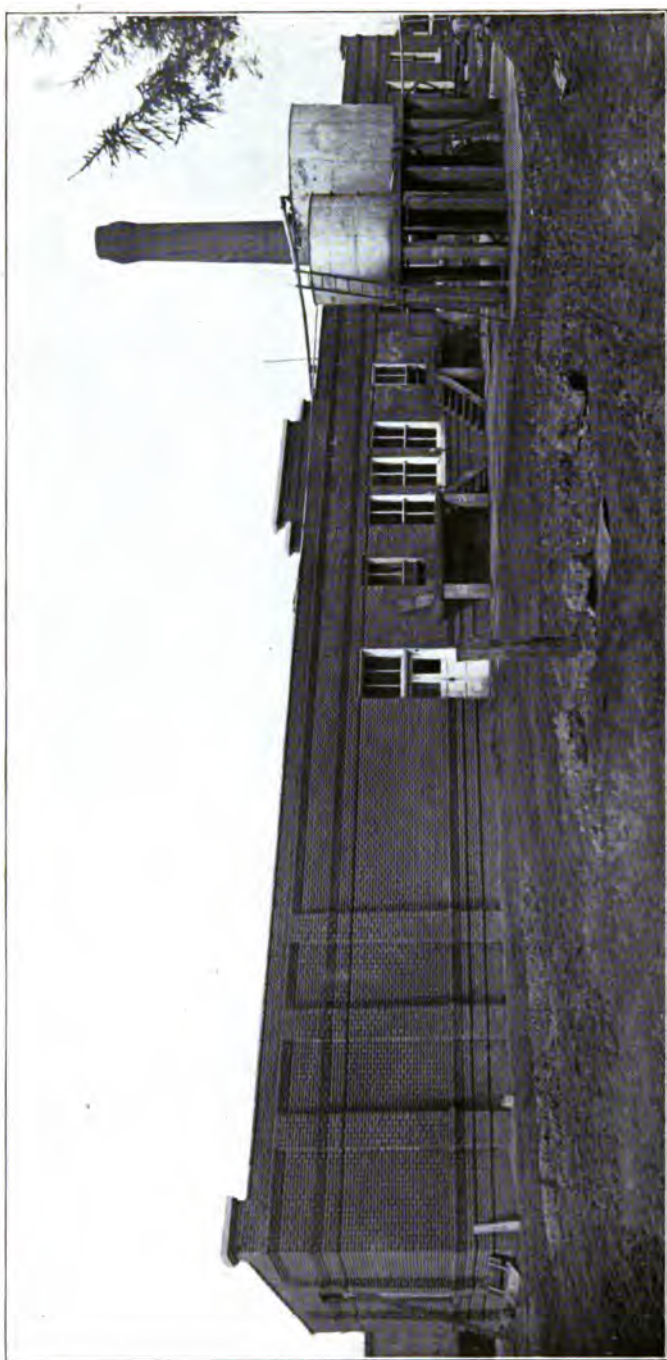
To make a long story short, hand separators are here to stay. They may have caused a useless waste of cream, they may have caused endless worry and needless expense, they may yet cause a complete readjustment of the whole butter business. But the fact remains that the number of hand separators is constantly increasing and their use is now well nigh universal. The author has made an impartial, and he hopes, a fairly intelligent study of this question the past few years, and he is of the firm conviction that as hand separators are better understood they will be better liked.

True it is, their use in some localities has given rise to a poorer grade of butter owing to uneven quality as compared with the product of the "whole milk" plant, but if we go a little more deeply into the subject we are bound to decide that possibly the fault does not lie in the hand separators so much as it does with those who use and operate them. A case in point which will serve to illustrate my idea is found in the accounts we read of the use of mahogany wood when the first logs were sent from the West Indies to England many years ago, where the cabinet makers and wood workers declared the wood too hard to ever be cut into lumber, and that it dulled their tools so that it was impossible ever to do anything with it. But the course of events proved that this view of the possibilities of mahogany were premature and ill advised.

In the nature of the case a new system in the handling of cream under



A MODERN "BUTTER BASEMENT", SHOWING REFRIGERATING PIPES THROUGH WHICH  
COLD AIR IS CONSTANTLY CIRCULATED



A MODERN CREAMERY IN IOWA

such widely different conditions as we find in various sections of this country, must take a long while to go into successful operation. Those who are face to face with the separator problem should make the best of conditions, and strive to educate the individual farmer and his wife and family how best to use the separator so as to produce the best results. Already there are many cases where much has been done in an educational way, and we find more and more satisfactory results are coming from hand separators properly used.

That there are signal advantages possessed by the "whole milk" process over the hand separator system no butter man will deny, but the hand separators and the centralizing plant have made such headway of late years that it seems as if the old system is doomed to extinction. And if money is really lost to the industry we may rest assured that methods will be gradually changed and modified until the standard of quality in the butter produced will be improved so as to obtain the maximum returns from the minimum amount of cream and labor. A careful, scientific study of the treatment and handling of separator cream after a few more years' experience may develop some startling results. To say the least, the field is an inviting one for experiment and research.

Because of the advent of the hand separator and its widespread use with more or less satisfactory results to the butter trade at large, the question has been raised a thousand times: Will not the high and low grades of butter be eliminated entirely? It must be confessed that for a long while it has appeared as if a definite answer must be made to this question it would have to be answered in the affirmative. But as we have just said, the future of the hand separator is a sealed book that no man is yet able to pry open and read.

It would, indeed, be a sad commentary on the trade to allow the haphazard methods formerly in vogue to continue, and he is blind to the real situation who supposes that the intelligent farmer and stockman and their industrious, intelligent wives will rest satisfied with fifty or seventy-five cents on the dollar for their cream when they might as well have the whole dollar by proper treatment of cream and using every means to make it fresh, pure and of the highest quality when delivered to the creamery to be made into butter.

This is the real solution of the problem and the real answer to the question that has been raised. If the cream is right and all of it from every farmer is right, it is not far to see that the butter will be nearly right also,—at any rate, much better than when made of cream of varying age, quality and butter fat. Centralizers are gradually working out better systems for using this cream taken from widely separated districts.

Now, I hope that I shall not be charged with being an apostle of the hand separator, for I have no interest in the world in their manufacture or sale, and my only object in even referring to them at all in this work is because any article purporting to cover the butter situation in this country would be maliciously incomplete to leave out entirely hand separators and centralizer plants. I repeat that they have come to stay and those who are compelled to deal with them and their users should strive to improve both, and also devise plans to bring the present system up to the highest possible efficiency, for the constant aim for higher standards and better methods is the secret of success both in making and selling butter.

✓ No one change in the system of handling butter in the last generation has been more far reaching than the scheme of putting up prints.

When we come to think about it, the only wonder is that it was not done long before. The butter man who is wise is always looking for a plan to make the name of his product a household word, to advertise his brand so that people will ask for it when they go to buy. It is a hard job to do this with tub butter under the old system where the retail grocer scooped out and weighed what every individual customer wanted.

Besides, all tubs look about the same, and the foxy grocer who might have a tub of real extras today and sold a customer who might come a few days later to get "some of the same butter I got before," would have a soft snap to charge the identical price for a bit of seconds which can be, and often is substituted in such cases, for be it understood the average retailer is not in business for his health and there are many of them who are fond of this kind of diversion.

But the pound print that is put out by a reputable wholesaler or the creamery itself, and which aims at building up a reputation for quality will most likely make their goods run about the same on the second or third round as on the first.

It takes a pound print to make butter susceptible to advertising, and we have too many phenomenal successes in popular pound prints to entertain any doubt about the possibilities in advertising butter. And when butter is properly advertised it causes more butter to be used. Those who have used the pound print system know full well it is absolutely imperative that the standard of quality be always maintained. The brand must be protected and it is next kin to suicide to a brand to lower its quality, for once the public finds it is being cheated, confidence is destroyed and the value of a brand is gone forever.

The main reason given by the moving spirit in the leading pound print butter concern in this country as being responsible for the enor-

mous trade the concern has worked up, is that the management has never departed from its original policy to put up the best butter in the best shape and get paid for the service. Once get a good brand and put up a good grade and your battle for success in handling prints is half won.

Before leaving the subject I desire to say that any man who wants to succeed in the butter business must be up-to-date and progressive. It is exacting in every phase. The work is sometimes arduous, but rarely distasteful. It is scientific to a degree, an alluring game either from the creamery or the marketing point of view. Decidedly, it is not an avocation for mollicoddles who are looking for easy money or soft snaps, or for the commercial pirates who are out for the coin and who do not care especially how or where they get it.

Butter has been made and sold well, but I expect improvements in both branches of the trade, and with good red blood and trained gray matter behind the different departments concerned in its making and selling we may safely depend on some pleasant surprises in the future.

## CHAPTER XXV

### EGGS

If the true history of the system of handling eggs could be written it would read like a fairy tale. Forsooth, a story replete with elves and grottoes and with moonbeams playing hide and seek over a placid lake, with a Cinderella frolicking with the fairies, could be no more entrancing to one who has followed closely the ins and outs, and the ups and downs of a season's record of the egg deal during any given year, at least, in the past decade.

It is not exaggerating to say that no less imagination is required to enter into a full understanding of the stories in a juvenile fairy book than is necessary to grasp the variable fortunes of the prosaic commodity under consideration.

However, I hope no staid egg man will be so unkind as to accuse me of trying to belittle his honored calling by suggesting the comparison cited above, although if someone is disposed to find fault with me for so doing I have but to declare that not a few times have I mused over the striking similarity between a downright fairy tale and the unsubstantial shadow of prospective profits in a heavy load of high-priced eggs that hang trembling in the balance so delicately poised that even an excited breath sends the whole load down with a crash that makes strong men shudder and all but weep as the simple child when he suffers the first rude awakening from his illusion about the capers of Santa Claus or Mother Goose.

But why open this chapter on eggs with a dissertation on the seamy side? Wherefore this talk about fairies? Shall I make the bold confession that I candidly believe eggs are the most speculative commodity in the whole realm of produce? If so, I shall spare further suspense and will take you into my confidence so as to make a short cut to the meat of our subject by saying I believe they are.

Obviously, the gist of my argument on this matter must be reserved

until our story progresses further. Perhaps I should say that the arguments assert themselves as the story unfolds, for it is my purpose to write a plain, unvarnished tale that will be so blunt as not only to call a spade by its right name, but also to call an egg an egg, and also to call a fool a fool.

However, for fear my motives may be misconstrued I must say a word or two about the men who handle eggs, and who may unjustly accuse me of making faces at the whole fraternity unless some sort of explanation is presently forthcoming.

And right here we strike a snag when we try even to take a birds-eye view of the complex aggregation of humanity that gathers, buys, ships, stores, sells or gambles in these ovoids of food that are produced in nearly every nook and corner of this broad country, and which enter so largely into the daily food of the nation as to be considered a necessity in the hovel and palace alike.

Behold this concourse if you can sweep a continent at a glance with your mind's eye! Noble spectacle this. It embraces the housewives on a thousand thousand farms, the country store-keepers at as many cross-roads or villages, and a legion of people who make a business of concentrating lots of five and ten to four hundred cases for shipment to the larger market centers. It embraces, if you please, a throng of good business men who know little else and study practically nothing but eggs, and who usually turn their special information and experience to good account, for, be it understood, some men have made and are still making money buying and selling eggs in a sane business way.

Then too, in your concourse would be a horde of speculators who look like ordinary egg dealers, who would be found on closer inspection to be more like lunatics in a plunging match than plain business men operating on good money in handling a legitimate business.

As subsidiary factors you would have to get a line on the bankers who finance the deals, the storage men who take care of the enormous amount of eggs kept for six or eight months under refrigeration with the expectation of a profit, and also the railroad men who look after the shipping of carlots or less from one point to another from the time the eggs are first collected at initial points until they reach the markets where they are consumed.

A close observer would perhaps find some others who could establish their right to stand up and be counted with the big egg trade, for it easily includes all colors, creeds and conditions of humanity. Any enumeration of the egg people in toto would probably include the polling list in many a bailiwick without the slightest change, and would also



permit the neighborhood sewing circle in some sections to be thrown in for good measure.

Is it any wonder that in such a concourse we find radical differences of opinion, an utter lack of sympathy for one another's welfare, and an absolute disregard for the broken bones and cracked heads of the unfortunate players who fall by the wayside, victims, commercially speaking, of the ruthless mass on tackle plays or the revolving wedges as in the old style of foot-ball?

Is it not to be expected, may I ask, if this bunch, out for the coin and intoxicated with the passion for a "big killing," would not occasionally run riot and bring up with a crash that sends the whole load down in a jiffy?

Yes, I frankly acknowledge that in opening this chapter I have so far taken the reader along a pathway over the ragged mountain-sides of egg-dom in order to secure attention, as we seem invariably to feel a keener interest in the scenery if we first behold the vast stretches of mountain peaks, and especially if we view the prospect at sunrise from some craggy point with the eagle soaring between us and the peaceful valley below.

Verily, there are counterparts of my crude word picture to be found in the handling of eggs. Some, of course, have observed the game only from the peaceful quiet of the valley where the sunshine and the birds are wont to come, and who follow the even tenor of their way like ants about the base of Mt. Everest, unconscious of the majestic peak towering above. Then too, others see the alluring features of the business only from the elevated places and seemingly prefer a pair of wings or a balloon from which to handle their trades,—apparently oblivious of the fact that eggs are no less subject to economical laws than balloons are to the law of gravitation.

At any rate, the egg business as we find it today is a well developed specialty in the produce field. That there is sufficient encouragement to make a specialty of a commodity that requires so many people of so many kinds to look after its various ramifications is proof enough that the volume and value of the business is at least worthy of more than passing attention.

He must be imaginative who can give even an appropriate idea about the value of the eggs produced in this country during the run of a year, yet it does not take a lively guesser to see that the amount easily runs into the millions, and very likely into hundreds of millions, for think of every other man, woman and child of a number something like 100,000,000 people in this country eating several dozen eggs during a twelve month.

And everybody eats eggs nowadays. Not only do we find them boiled, fried, scrambled, in omelets and in "ham and," but they enter largely into cakes, pies, cookies and buns of one kind or another. Besides, an enormous amount of undergrade eggs is used for dressing leather and for various chemical purposes.

No one food product is so popular, if not always so cheap. But whether they are used soft boiled or poached for the dyspeptic or convalescent, or for egg-nog to placate the connoisseur, they must be had, and it sometimes occurs that the American people can hardly be supplied with enough eggs at any price. An occasional whim of the public in this respect, as we have observed in a former chapter, has been responsible in no small measure for the insane speculation that often occurs in the trade, and which is so frequently the undoing of firms and individuals as we shall see later on.

At best, the egg deal when viewed at any stage of the game is eccentric and treacherous. It is as fickle as a March wind on some occasions; while at times it shows the strength of a stone wall. But the very uncertainty which generally prevails, and which has been induced by the speculative feature made possible by the cold storages and the banks in recent years, it may be set down with double emphasis that by no system of logic or rule of produce law can one "count one's chicks until one's eggs are hatched." Of course, that is only another way of stating the fact that no expected profits from eggs can be called real money until the aforesaid profits are in hand and preferably to one's credit at the bank.

I have seen advices in a few telegrams received in a large market during the winter while there were yet heavy stocks of storage eggs to be worked out, telling about scattering lots of fresh eggs in the South and Southwest destroy confidence among a coterie of men whose aggregate holdings of cooler stock ran into the millions. I have observed a handful or two of fresh eggs put up on the exchange in a leading market at the critical moment when the outcome of a season's speculating was trembling in the balance send the whole crowd of traders on the stampede like a drove of steers on the plains. I have seen the mercury play hide and seek with the zero point all over the country, which lasted several days, and shut off egg production, causing the egg market to go up as fast as the mercury went down, and then fall itself as suddenly.

In an earlier chapter we noted that various factors are constantly at work shaping conditions and prices of various markets for different kinds of produce. To clinch our point we need only to mention eggs. Supply and demand, while the main factors, without intelligent analysis, are hardly one, two, three in the egg game.

Honestly, it seems to me that eggs delight in being erratic. It is seldom the deal happens to happen the same way twice in succession. Pure dope is unavailing; to handicap the ponies is mere kindergarten exercise as compared with telling what may or may not befall eggs.

But there are lots of soothsayers and fellows with tabulated nonsense every season trying to beat a bunch of tom-toms to drive away the eclipse over the face of the egg deal, and it may not be foreordained but I have been possessed of the idea that if eggs can possibly have a sentient faculty, taken in the aggregate, they strive to make these prognosticators and historians look like a two spot by doing the reverse of what they figure out in their premature dope.

No rule can be laid down as an infallible guide for the successful handling of eggs any more than a sure thing system can be figured out to beat the bookmakers.

But it is true of the egg deal that plain ordinary common sense is the best guide when to buy and when to sell. If the judgment of an experienced produce man tells him eggs are too high for a fairly safe investment when they are being stored, he should have self-control enough to play hands off. If it is necessary to put away some eggs, and he is sure his trade will want a certain amount of stock, even at a higher price than looks safe as an investment, it should be set down as a hard and fast rule that so many and no more will be bought and stored. It would be a great surprise how a bit of horse sense will help now and then to deal with a complex egg situation, as is true of other similar situations that arise in produce affairs every now and then.

But when the speculative fever addles the brain of your egg man, and he gets started on the wrong track, it is a safe bet he meets with a drubbing sooner or later, for if he wins the first time he is tempted to play it stronger the next, and if his load is too heavy and the deal goes wrong some way, as it can and will sometimes, it may mean another tombstone in the commercial cemetery, for the official produce undertaker has a knack at hustling egg speculators to an untimely grave without waiting for mass of flowers, and there follows just a plain obituary notice in the newspapers and some empty egg cases are left to show where an egg speculator has been.

The advent of the cold storages with the services they offer has wrought a great change in the system of handling eggs, and the range of prices in all markets within the memory of many a middle-aged egg dealer.

It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion as to whether or not these changes have been desirable in every respect, and it is sufficient for our purposes to note that they have come and come to stay. The

application of refrigeration to the egg business, resulting in their being carried for several months, is a fact which we must deal with. In a previous chapter we observed that the storages discharge the function of a bank and also an insurance company, and it is only worth while in this connection to state that the crazy speculation in storage eggs is due almost entirely to the easy means for speculation which have been opened up by these two great aids in the handling of eggs, for if they would not make it possible and even encourage speculation in high-priced eggs, as we have frequently seen during the last few years, it is plain that there would be less trouble. There is a well founded doubt if headlong plunging in high-priced eggs has not lost more money than has ever been made after that system of trading.

While we have the cold storage phase of the egg deal under consideration it may not be improper to say a few words about the selling of storage eggs to the consumer for the fresh article. For this imposition a remedy must be found sooner or later, and it is imperative that the consumptive demand be not reduced to a minimum by a game of swindling that springs from the greediness of retailers and jobbers, and which is too often encouraged, I regret to say, by some people in the wholesale trade who apparently think it is quite correct for them to follow any scheme that will enable them to get the largest possible profit today, but who have little concern for the morrow, or for others in the trade who may have a bunch of eggs that cannot be moved because the public is held up and made to pay exorbitant prices for what eggs they buy. It does not occur to me that it is at all necessary for the public to be humbugged in order that storage eggs show a profit if they are handled in a legitimate way. The public need storage eggs as badly as storage eggs need the public.

Just how the remedy is to be applied for the evil of which I am complaining is not so easy to see, for any remedy that will be effective will be very difficult and expensive to put into operation. Yet it is almost a question of self-preservation in some markets during certain critical times that a drastic remedy against this old time imposition be found and applied. Federal regulations will probably be necessary to correct this bad practice, and if the United States government takes hold of the matter in the right way it is likely that something will be accomplished.

I take it that any food product so generally used as eggs should be of sufficient importance for the United States government to take cognizance of any manipulations which might tend to affect the movement or the quality of such product, especially if it is likely to affect the public health if improperly handled. At the same time I do not want to be misunderstood as endorsing the senseless clamor we have had against storage

eggs as such, and which has come mostly from people who have generally made no first hand investigations into the matter.

But it cannot be denied that storage eggs are bought right and left in a score of markets during the fall and winter in a jobbing way at twenty to twenty-five cents per dozen, and are run out by the retailers to consumers in half dozen or dozen lots at thirty to forty cents a dozen, or even more sometimes. That they have nearly always been sold for fresh eggs is too well known to require argument.

If the eggs were sold for just what they are it probably would not be so bad, but in addition to charging the exorbitant profit the consuming public are led to believe they are getting real fresh eggs. I have no hesitancy in saying that the better element in the trade will sooner or later have to lend a hand in stamping out this abuse. Too many times have we seen instances where wholesale dealers have aided and abetted in this nefarious traffic. It is a shameful fact that certain men have been connected with the egg trade who, in common with other human jackals, have resorted to all kinds of devices to rob consumers and even to impair the digestion of the public, and even to poison people, if only a few paltry dollars were in sight.

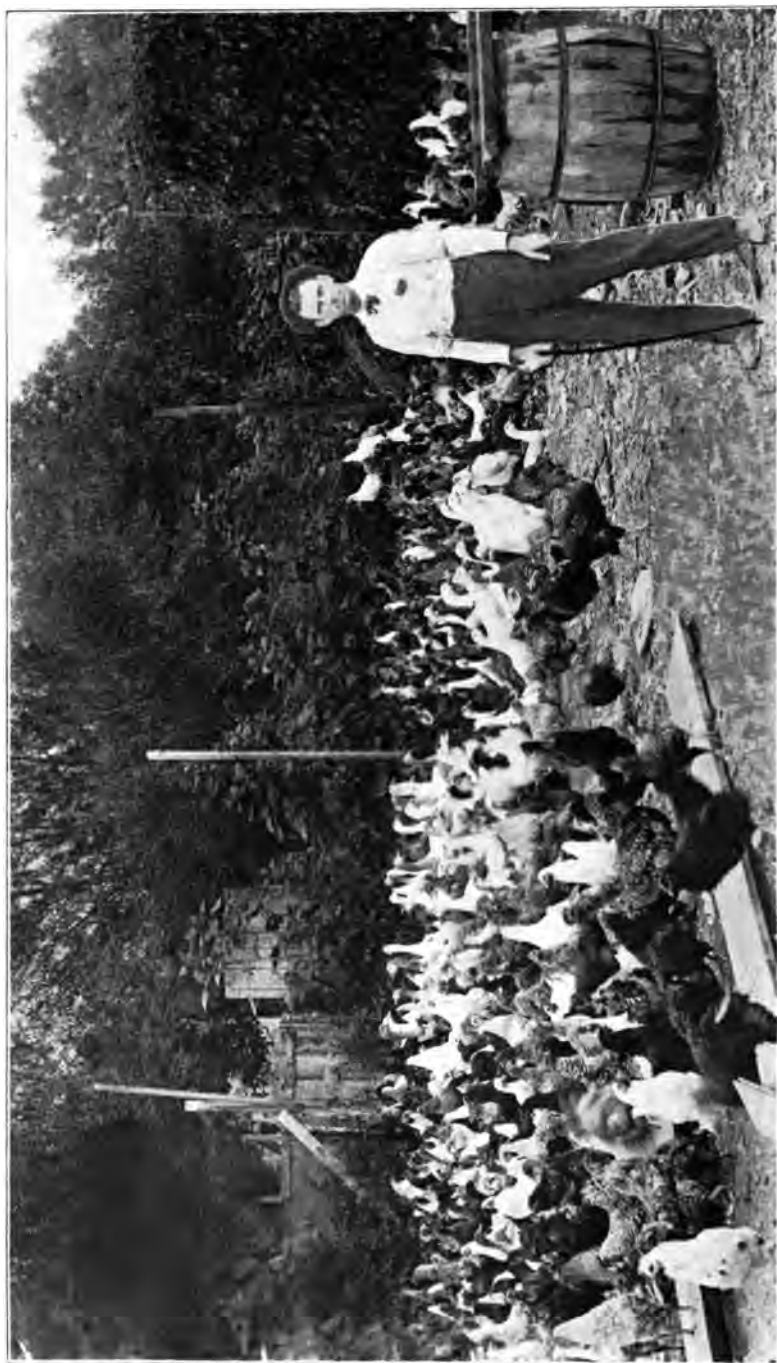
We have to thank these two-legged hyenas for a great deal of this insistent public agitation of late years for crazy laws against cold storages. They have so abused every principle of decent business as to outrage the patience of the average man and woman in this country, and to cause the people to try to get back at them for the harm that has been done. Can the public be blamed?

Think of all the rotten mess that has been fed the American people in the way of bad eggs. Rotten eggs with flies in the cans which were put up for bakers' use have been found by government pure food agents from time to time. Some of these eggs which are broken up and put into cans are unfit for food, while it cannot be denied that a certain percentage of eggs that will not do to put out to the public in the shell are good enough to be used by bakers, who can mix them with other ingredients so as to cause no injurious effects to those who eat their bread and cakes. But I want to emphasize the statement that eggs which are actually filthy and rotten have no place in a baker's shop, or any place else where human food is being prepared or sold.

If necessary to break up this kind of business I think some dealers who make a practice of handling rotten eggs should be sent to the penitentiary, and unless I read the signs of the times wrong we are not far from having such action taken if it shall become necessary to put a stop to this nasty traffic. Personally I have a much higher regard for a hold-



AN EGG CANDLER AT WORK—BY A DEPT TURN OF THE HAND AN EGG IS INSPECTED AND  
TRANSFERRED IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE



A COMMERCIAL POULTRY YARD—SOUTH DAKOTA

up man than for the despicable rascal that cares not if he poisons me and others to get our money.

At the same time, I think there are legitimate limits for the handling of low grade eggs. In others words, an egg may be only bad in part. Such stock, I believe, can be broken up and have the bad part separated from the good so that it may be used for some purpose. Those firms who make a business of handling these undergrade eggs should be provided with an official inspector at their places of business, whose duty it should be to see that only the parts of eggs fit for human food are allowed to get into the commercial food channels.

It may be perfectly true, as some people claim, that undergrade eggs have their uses and that it would be unjust to the egg trade to entirely outlaw these eggs of indifferent quality. There is no question but for chemical purposes, and for tanning leather, glazing, and for various other uses, these undergrade eggs are quite desirable. But I am unalterably opposed to allowing people who make a business of handling them to have a free hand for breaking up and canning all kinds of undergrade stock merely because the eggs may have "some" commercial use. I think this business should be put under strict government supervision similar to the packing house business, and I would like very much to see the severest penalty the law can impose inflicted upon those who undertake to violate such regulations as would restrict these rotten eggs to industrial purposes, and not to permit them in any sense to be used for human food. The public have eaten too many "spinkles"; they will not tolerate them much longer.

Perhaps it would not be out of place to say something about the well developed system of grading eggs, for I have no doubt but the average reader outside of the trade has little or no idea what is meant by spots, checks, dirties, or even extras, for these words are more or less of a technical nature. My only purpose in including anything on this subject here is to give the reader outside of the trade a clearer idea of the subject we have under discussion, for it has been my experience that in order to draw any intelligent conclusion about eggs at all we must understand what a good egg is if we expect to form a conclusion as to what is meant by a bad egg.

Eggs are graded by candling. As the name implies, candling involves holding an egg before a lighted candle or some other good light to determine the condition of the egg from the appearance it has when subjected to the light. The practiced eye can detect at a glance just what may be the quality of a given egg under inspection.

It is hardly necessary to say that electric or incandescent lights are



now generally used instead of the old time tallow candle, because the electric light is more powerful, and quite naturally, the stronger the light the better. Perhaps the best candling device is a small tin box with a dark background in which an electric bulb is fixed; in one side is an opening about the size of an egg so that the candler can hold the egg near the hole where he can see quickly and readily determine the soundness, fullness and freshness of an egg. Those who have taken the time to do a little candling know that with the proper apparatus, a steady hand and fairly good eyesight are about all required to arrive at a correct idea of what a given egg sample shows for a whole case or car lot.

A strictly fresh egg from a healthy chicken hen exhibits a rosy look, which, taken with the full effect of the white, shows the stock is fresh. When there is found a shrunken effect, or the yolk is on one side, there can be little doubt but the egg has been laid for some time, and cannot be graded as fresh. An enlarged air space at the end of the egg is one of the surest indications that it has been laid for some time, as this air space becomes larger as the liquid matter of the egg gradually evaporates after the egg is laid. And where an egg is found with "blood rings," due to germination having set in in warm weather it is a safe bet that the egg has been laid for some time, except when these "blood rings" are found in the eggs of young pullets early in the spring, probably due to physiological causes.

Grades, therefore, depend first upon quality as to freshness and size. Sometimes color enters into the classification for certain markets or for special requirements.

In most markets extras or specials are of the very best quality, and are relatively perfect from a commercial standpoint. In order to reach this higher grade an egg must be full, sound, sweet and uniform in size, and the cases must not show a greater loss than 10 to 20 per cent of poor eggs during certain seasons of the year, the heavier loss being allowed during the warm weather.

The next grades are generally listed as prime firsts, firsts, ordinary firsts, etc., which permit losses from 15 to 35 per cent. for prime firsts, from 30 to 55 per cent for firsts, and 40 to 70 per cent loss on ordinary firsts during the different seasons of egg production. These losses, of course, imply losses from candling and do not necessarily mean eggs unfit for food, because the matter of size enters into the candler's grading, and also the eggs which may be stained or have dirt on the outside, may fail to "pass," though they may be perfectly good inside.

The term "storage packed" applies on about the same basis of quality as for other grades just cited, except a different style of packing is used in

order to protect the eggs during the long period they are to be kept in storage, and also for insuring safe handling and shipping after they are taken out. After an egg has been stored it is known to the trade as a "refrigerator" egg when it is taken out and offered for sale.

Current receipts are eggs as they come from the country and may be strictly fresh, or they may show a heavy percentage of inferior quality, due to the length of time held by the farmer's wife or by the country merchant before being sent to market. Of course, the trade understands in a general way what may be expected when it is known from what state or section current receipts are coming at different seasons, but at best, the term current receipts is like charity, as both may be truthfully said to cover a multitude of sins. It is easy to see that eggs coming in miscellaneous lots need candling and grading so as to separate the good, bad and indifferent.

Low grade eggs are known as rots, spots, checks and dirties, though the last named may be perfectly good to eat, but off grade for having dirty or soiled shells.

It is quite true that the services of expert egg candlers in the larger markets could be dispensed with in a large measure, and much money could be saved if eggs were always shipped to market while they are fresh. Holding eggs at initial points until they lose a good share of their freshness is an old trouble for which a remedy is badly needed. During the last few years a great deal of serious thinking has been done to try to prevent the heavy losses which take place by failure to market their are produced and the time they reach the consumer, frequently amounting to as much as two or three weeks or more.

Lately the United States Department of Agriculture has taken commendable steps in trying to educate farmers and farmers' wives how best to prevent the heavy losses which take place by failure to market their eggs every day or two, instead of once or twice in as long as a fortnight, heretofore the favorite method in some sections. Already considerable progress has been made in this respect and there are many people in the trade who have to thank the government for the good work which has been done. A very simple, practical set of rules has been worked out for the marketing of eggs from the farm, and if these rules were only taken seriously by the farmers it would save a great deal of trouble which the trade has had to contend with in the past. The gist of these rules is to use cleanliness in collecting and handling the eggs, and to send them to market as soon as possible.

Heretofore, country merchants have been largely responsible for the trouble with bad eggs, as it often happens where they take eggs in from

farmers they put them away in a heated room where they are side by side with various other articles such as kerosene, bacon, etc., and in many cases under a temperature that actually starts germination in the eggs. I hesitate to say it but I hardly think the average country merchant has any business dabbling with eggs at all, especially in view of the fact that so many of them exhibit little or no interest in hastening the eggs on to markets where they are to be consumed.

There is no doubt but many of these merchants have been imposed upon by farmers who bring the eggs in and trade them for calico, tobacco and other merchandise found in a country or village store. In some cases the merchants have stated in so many words that they were afraid to question the farmers regarding the freshness of the eggs, as they would likely go some place else to trade.

Complaints have been made that farmers have often taken eggs which had been put through the incubator and have refused to hatch, and have actually sold them to country merchants and to others who were credulous enough to believe everything that an "honest farmer" might say. I am not prepared to say how widespread this despicable practice has been, but there is no doubt such traffic has been the means of causing health officials to contend for the passage of certain laws which would make it criminal to sell eggs of this kind for human food. I may say that I believe thoroughly in the passage and enforcement of such regulations.

The crooked farmer who would sell old incubator eggs to the country merchant, and take his good money or merchandise for them, is just as big a crook and is just as great an enemy to the public as the wholesale dealer who makes it a business to break up and can rotten eggs with the expectation of selling them to someone, who in turn is to use them in preparing human food. I only wish that the whole crew involved in such business could be taken up and put into the penitentiary or swung from a gibbet, for I think every fair-minded man will agree with me that they are such a menace to the health of our people as to be considered a public enemy. I could hardly conceive worse criminals.

If all eggs were handled quickly and pushed along to the consuming public they would not only bring more money, but it is the opinion of many well-known dealers that more eggs would be used by the public. In certain localities egg buyers have found it profitable to send out wagons on regular routes every day or every other day to purchase eggs directly from the farmer, and follow a plan to pay them exactly what the eggs are worth at the time they are taken on the wagon. This is a very commendable idea and should be extended wherever it is possible to put it into operation.

Another excellent practice which is coming more and more into vogue is the plan of buying eggs on a basis of actual weight. It is easy to see that a class of eggs which weigh as much as 60 pounds to the case is worth much more than another class which runs 45 to 50 pounds. The popularity of certain breeds of small hens because they lay more eggs is giving rise to a lot of trouble among dealers who have been accustomed to buy eggs on a case basis heretofore.

Every egg man, and every consumer for that matter, knows that a large egg, such as is produced by the Plymouth Rock hen, is worth a great deal more than the small egg which is produced by the Leghorns and other kinds of hens which lay a small egg.

Wherever eggs cannot be collected at regular intervals it is no doubt a good method to buy on a loss-off basis, for this system has gone a long way towards settling the matter of quality, and also solving the second-hand case problem.

The loss-off plan amounts to just what the name implies, for the eggs are candled and the country merchant or the farmer is paid for just what the eggs grade as to quality. Recent legislation in a number of our states has made this system much easier than heretofore because all competitors are put on the same basis, and the farmer does not enjoy any greater benefit by selling to one than to another. It is simply another case where public sentiment is asserting itself against rotten eggs, and no one is more pleased to see the laws being put into effect than the writer. The best way to effectually settle the bad egg problem is to prevent their getting into the channels of trade.

Country merchants who frequently persist in using any old rattle-trap of a box to hold eggs, simply because they figured it was the cheapest way, found that the cheap cases are the most dear after all. It took losses on top of losses to prove this, however, and many shippers were literally forced to adopt the loss-off system because of the breakage in transit when the eggs were shipped into concentrating points or into the markets in these old cases. I am not interested in egg cases in any way, but I do not hesitate to say that unless these second-hand cases are reinforced with iron straps which enables them to stand up in transit, and which entitles them to the same freight rate as new cases, they should be ruled out altogether, as they are worse than useless for all practical purposes.

While we have the subject of egg cases in mind I want to say that it has always been a puzzle to me why the regulation thirty dozen case, built along the lines on which it is constructed, was ever adopted as the standard package in this country. I have no hesitancy in saying that I

think it would have been hard to select a worse package. In the first place, it is itself constructed in a flimsy way, yet it is intended to protect a very fragile commodity.

Again, why should thirty dozen be selected as the number to include in a case? It seems to me that twenty would have been a much better unit to have worked on, because, in the first place, it would result in a smaller bulk in such a fragile package. Of course, I am aware of the fact that it would take concerted action among the trade all over the country ever to make any change from the regulation white wood case holding thirty dozen eggs, but it seems to me that unless some plan is devised to make a better case we shall have to expect some changes sooner or later.

I am firmly convinced that the day will yet come when the trade will use some kind of metal case which can be knocked down or folded, one that can also be sterilized from time to time which will make it absolutely clean and as good as a new case in every respect. While a case of this kind might cost more than the cases now used, I believe in the end they would be found much cheaper than the white wood case which is now taken and made to do duty on one trip to market and then is usually thrown away. No one who is at all familiar with the subject can deny that there is now an enormous waste in egg cases, it being estimated that something like 20,000,000 are turned out annually which are practically all thrown away after they have made their one trip to market.

In carrying out the idea of a correct package I want to say that the use of No. 2 fillers which gave so much trouble to many people in the trade a few years ago, and which are even now used to too great an extent, were no doubt conceived along with the rattle-trap box used as a cheap package for shipping eggs. Only fillers made of stout cardboard should be used in packing eggs for shipping or for storing. Poor fillers are dear at any price, and their use should be discouraged. There are new-fangled ideas in fillers just as there are in cases, but the old-fashioned filler consisting of cross-sections of good cardboard joined so as to make a square hole in which the egg rests, with a square sheet of cardboard at the top and bottom of each layer of eggs, and then a liberal supply of excelsior or shavings between the top and bottom layers of eggs and the top and bottom of the case, make a very desirable package so far as the inside packing is concerned.

And while we are talking about packages it may not be out of place to say a word or two about the cartons holding one dozen eggs, which are now becoming so popular among retailers and even among jobbers who put up eggs in these cartons with their own brand printed thereon. This is a splendid idea, and is one which really enables a dealer to work

up an asset in a good brand of eggs. The mistake should not be made, however, in thinking that an attractive carton with a good sounding name will take the place of quality inside the eggs inside the carton. The brand is good to proclaim quality; otherwise it is useless.

I had almost forgotten to say anything regarding the process of desiccating eggs, which as the term indicates, means a drying-out of the liquid in eggs and making the residue susceptible of being rendered into a powder, which is usually canned or put up in cartons and stored away under proper conditions to be saved for future use.

Too frequently spots and undergrade eggs have gone for desiccating purposes, and no doubt if only good eggs had been employed for desiccating, a much larger demand would have been created for this product long ago, as it fills a need that is hard to satisfy with any other substitute.

Desiccated eggs have been used extensively among bakers and others who find it necessary to get a quick mixture. To these powdered eggs a little warm water is added and after stirring for a few moments the egg matter is reproduced in about the same consistency as scrambled eggs would be before being dried out.

Quite a business has been worked up in desiccated egg products for export, and since the dry powder is especially desirable for use in domestic mining and lumber camps where a small tin may be carried or kept, but where eggs in the shell are out of the question, and for military purposes, the advantage of the powdered form is quite manifest, as a tin can be taken on the prospecting trip or march and scrambled eggs and coffee may be had on a few moments' notice. If desiccated eggs had only a better reputation they would doubtless be used more extensively by our people.

### A EULOGY ON THE AMERICAN HEN

And now as a final word about eggs permit me to say I should feel myself an apostle of ingratitude, and a destroyer of some of the sweetest sentiments in life, were I to close my remarks upon this subject without some slight tribute to the great American hen, for she is the source of all our stupendous traffic in eggs. It is she that causes the industry to survive from season to season, it is she that produces all the profits, it is she that yields up her finer sensibilities to the sinister commercial spirit of the times.

Yet we seem to begrudge her the stunted praise she may receive for her industry and the faithful performance of her duty day after day, season after season. What a stupendous task is hers! Of the vast labor and immense outlay of money the proceedings involve with respect to her aggregate product we little dream.

If I had the poetic gift of a Homer or a Milton and could feast upon an egg diet for a fortnight I would then try my hand at a grand epic that might in some small degree pay a fitting tribute to that marvelous fowl,—the common chicken hen.

Behold this humble feathered creature that was cheated in the beginning by nature when gaudy feathered dresses, pretty rose combs and other things which delight the feminine heart were being distributed among the haughty roosters, and who was deprived even of the spurs she so badly needs to defend herself and her brood. Instead of having conferred upon her the ability to crow when she had done something worth crowing over, as happens nearly every day, she must content herself with a cackle, and if perchance she essays to learn to crow she is likely to get her neck wrung, for all animated creation seems to abhor a crowing hen and a whistling woman.

Observe the lowly tread of the hen in the millions of barnyards from Maine to Mexico! See her as she evades the enforced attentions of Sir Chanticleer at every turn. Whether she tries to catch a grasshopper or pauses to dip her parched bill in a chicken trough, her over-lord is by her side vowing his undying affection, and at the same time blinking his other eye at a dozen affinities in the barnyard. How seriously she goes about her affairs, and yet how guilty of intrigue and deceptive show is this rascally-cock with his flowing tail feathers and his deep-laid plans to distract the hen and drive her mad.

I maintain that her career is strenuous and her friends are few. Though worthy of the highest encomiums man can utter there has been no suitable appreciation of her worth set down in all the realm of story and song. I am fully convinced that our Revolutionary sires who crossed swords with the redcoats and demonstrated their superior fighting ability, afterwards made a serious blunder when they selected the eagle, instead of the common chicken hen, as the bird representing the spirit of this stalwart nation.

Why?

The reason is perfectly simple. In the first place, the hen is a peaceful, industrious citizen, always willing to scratch for her living; there is no clinging vine in her make-up, for she exhibits a desire that is almost a passion to be self-supporting, and possessing withal the happy knack of minding her own business,—qualities that constitute the bed rock of national prosperity, and make for the solidarity of our great country. Pause and reflect for a moment what great aid she has rendered in the upbuilding of this grand republic. She has been a patron of the arts and sciences, for she rendered invaluable service in raising the standard among

stump speakers and "ham" actors when she gave us the "cowardly" egg that hits and runs, and which is so much dreaded by barn stormers and political spellbinders.

Yet my good hen delights in being a common citizen; she seeks no trappings of state nor outward show of wealth. Although she can convert herself into a flying-machine at will, she is content to rest on terra firma, and rarely gets "up in the air" unless found trespassing in a neighbor's garden, as some hens will do if the bugs and worms seem to challenge her to go over a board fence across the way, for good hens, like good housewives, show little regard for board fences if only a fat worm for the one, or a bit of gossip for the other, are to be had merely for the crossing over; and be it known, both hens and housewives frequently get into trouble over a line fence.

But to go back to the hen and the eagle: In the hen we have a domestic bird, one that yields great revenue and produces a large share of our food products. I can easily see why the Hindoo worships the ox, why the devout Moslem turns to Mecca for solemn prayer, and why the almond-eyed celestial holds in reverent memory the departed spirits of his ancestors. But it surpasses my untutored comprehension why the eagle, that awful destructive bird of prey, repulsive in every sense of the word, was chosen to go on our coat of arms, on our coins,—with that cruel beak and outstretched wings emblazoned upon our escutcheon calling for homage from our children's children,—when it is so clear that the great American hen is entitled to that honor by every rule of law and reason.

Is it cause for wonder that I take the position I do? Let him who doubts my sincerity as to the superior claims of the hen for the honors thrust upon the eagle, betake himself to a barnyard and assume the scientific attitude which aims to arrive at conclusions solely from the evidence at hand.

Let him observe the hen, if you please, in her natural habitat where she is forced to dodge frequently the sticks and stones shied at her by the small boy across the way, and under this nerve-racking strain where she is in positive and serious danger from a dozen other common enemies, such as foxes, hawks, snakes, prowling dogs and cats, as well as two-legged sneak thieves, let him observe all this I say, and see with what Spartan fidelity my good hen sticks to her task, and follows her schedule of an egg a day as long as she can, or until her marvelous maternal instinct overcomes her assiduity to lay eggs.

The hen is altogether a rational creature,—she reasons from cause to effect. Of this there is no doubt, for there is method in her every movement. An old friend in a Western state was telling me once of the ways



of a hen and among other ungrateful things said: "When one of my hens takes a notion to set, all h—I can't stop her." The sneering emphasis of his speech betrayed him as a man with a bad heart, and doubtless a flock of good hens, for, however this predilection may seem to others, I find cause for praising the hen on account of her unswerving purpose in this important matter.

Instead of heaping censure on her poor head for tackling a glass or porcelain nest egg and trying ambitiously as long as five or six weeks to hatch it, and sticks to the job even after she finds she has been grossly deceived, I think we should refer to her efforts as a faithful performance of duty which cannot be matched in all creation. I only wish that from such examples we could take the lesson home to ourselves, and display the same dogged determination in whatever we aim to accomplish in life. Thou sluggard, go no more to the ant, but to the hen for inspiration that means success.

O, that I were capable of expressing a proper eulogy on the great American hen! There is so much to commend and really so little to condemn in her deportment I fear we are not duly appreciative of her services. She is so sincere, so simple, so satisfied.

As a musician she is not to be sneezed at, for whether it be the simple "cluck-cluck" as she leads her brood after stray bugs or angle worms, or whether it be the resounding "c-o-c-k, c-o-c-k, cock-cock" which she always delivers for some minutes after depositing a newly laid egg, there is melody in her voice for there is joy in her heart always. Her song is the simple outpouring of a soul that is filled with music, and it is a serious criticism on the race of poets that they have sung of milkmaids tripping down the shady lane, and rarely have they even referred to the hen and her plaintive lay. But she shall have her Boswell at last. O, that I were pious enough to become her patron saint!

I like the hen because she is a good advertiser; she always calls attention to her operations, and she takes pardonable pride in her ability to lay good eggs. She is a great advocate of the sealed package, and an avowed apostle of the pure food doctrine, for her goods are always put out to the public with a view to making a reputation on merit. She is blissfully ignorant that any of her eggs ever prove unsatisfactory or give the least offense. She is the embodiment of lofty aspirations, the very incarnation of high ideals, while self sacrifice is the keystone in her scheme of philosophy. She is an artisan par excellence, a sworn enemy of race suicide, an indefatigable worker, an optimist for her constant song, a patriot by nature and a saint by rights, for who is so bold as to cast aspersions upon her fair name? Who would impute to her a sinister motive for her noble work?

And yet, instead of having a casket of gold or a costly mausoleum when she reaches her three score years and ten of chicken life, she is most likely hustled into a stuffy coop with a nondescript aggregation of other fowls and sent away to a distant market, where her carcass, if tough and elastic by reason of great age and prolonged exercise, is promptly dispatched to some hash foundry or boarding house where it is labeled with the euphonious appellation, "spring chicken," thus foisting a libel on her and her kind to go down in history; whereas, her epitaph should be written in liquid words of truth, and not in the profane doggerel of a resentful boarding house poet whose digestion is always bad.

I submit that an aroused public sentiment will spring up some day which will crush down this cruel course of tyranny and oppression to which my friend, the hen has been subjected for lo, these many years.

As a reward for her ingenuity in solving successfully the grave problems with which she is confronted, and for the faithful services she so cheerfully renders, we merely feed her crumbs; as a mark of respect to her sacred memory we sleep on her feathers. We even rob her nest before her eggs are cold. We unceremoniously snatch away her baby chicks while they yet seek the shelter of her brooding wings, and send them away to the market places to be sold as "peepers" because they peep.

And to cap the climax of this infamous treatment she receives, I am informed that her owners all over the land are robbing her of the chief aim and highest pleasure of her life by making general a process of putting her eggs into an oil-heated incubator of foul smell, and trying to develop a mechanical chick without regard for the numerous desirable maternal qualities which she might reasonably be expected to transmit to her brood were nature left to take its course, and she could embrace the coveted opportunity of making her nest where she chooses and hatching her eggs as she pleases.

It is an outrage, I submit, to cause a helpless creature like the hen to forego such a great function in life. By what right is she deprived of this duty? When, oh when, will this inquisition end? Is no strong arm left to challenge the cause of the weak and the oppressed? Are we to become a race of degenerates?

Our people should awaken to the true state of facts as they apply to this down-trodden fowl. A large fund should be created by popular subscription to build a towering monument to the memory of the hen. It should be a splendid shaft, grander than any sculptured obelisk of storied Egypt or gloriously triumphant pillar of classic Rome, and deep cut in whose shining marble sides words of affection should glisten and show that her rights and her worth had been recognized at last by the humblest and

the highest in the land. Such action might atone in a small way for the immeasurable wrongs she has suffered in the past, and would doubtless secure her against their repetition in the future.

May a generation of men be raised up yet who will honor themselves by honoring the hen! When her harmless fuss and feathers shall have supplanted the piercing scream of the awful eagle, then and not until then, can we say with joy "the dawn of universal peace and prosperity has come!"

May the Lord bless the Great American Hen; may her fame never die and her son never set!

## CHAPTER XXVI

### POULTRY

Commercial poultry is a subject so broad and so easily divided into specialties that a respectable size treatise easily could be devoted to the subject if a careful analysis of the various phases of this branch of produce were to be given anything like exhaustive treatment.

Even in a casual survey of the subject we are quickly impressed with the fact that the commercial poultry deal is one that never ends. It is a ceaseless round from day to day and year to year, although there are occasions when the market undergoes peculiar changes, due to a variety of causes as we shall see presently.

To some people engaged in handling poultry the ebb and flow of the tide during the big holidays are mere incidents, but the rank and file of the trade know that Thanksgiving, Christmas and the several Jewish holidays are to the trade what Derby day is to the races or the Fourth of July is to those who deal in flags and fireworks.

However, the special holidays are but a drop in the bucket compared with the trading day after day when the demand is necessarily smaller than during the holidays, but in the aggregate makes the business of commercial poultry, perhaps, second in volume and value to no other branch of the meat supply of the nation.

The author would be delighted to submit some figures on the value of the poultry produced and consumed in this country during a twelve month, but there are no statistics worthy of the name. The subject is so large and the industry so widespread that even Uncle Sam seems loath to do more than to take a chance shot at a guess as to the number of laying hens once every ten years. In the preceding chapter on eggs we observed that their production extended from Maine to Mexico, and it is quite clear that poultry and eggs are as intimately related as cause and effect. Indeed, the hens are the cause and eggs are the effects produced, for we must always bear in mind that the egg presupposes the hen that produces

it. And it is worthy of notice that about as many different kinds of people are identified with the poultry business as are engaged in the handling of eggs.

All poultry is handled either live or dressed, the latter being shipped sometimes with ice and sometimes without it, owing to the length of distance to be shipped and the condition of the weather.

Live poultry in small lots is shipped in coops of various patterns, sizes and shapes, ranging all the way from the oblong slat coop, "like mother used to make," to the new fangled ideas which are built with wire screens for the sides and top, and some of which are so flimsy as to make them crush like egg shells when stacked up one on another, thus making them very costly in the long run because of the fowls killed, unless great care is used in handling this kind of coop. Then, there is the patented knock-down coop that changes itself automatically and keeps a fowl guessing if it is on the outside or on the inside. Some of these new collapsible coops seem to have points in their favor, but it is a debatable question if the old fashion, rigid frame slat coop does not fill the bill best after all, for the main idea in getting a coop is not so much the looks, or the convenience in handling, as the certainty of not only affording fresh air to the fowls, but holding up and holding out until a shipment reaches its destination and has been sold.

In this connection the author cannot resist saying a few words about overcrowding fowls into a stuffy coop to be shipped in a badly ventilated car. This is always a mistake, both from a business as well as a humanitarian point of view, for there is no telling the heavy losses sustained in this way every season because careless as well as heartless shippers often try to make one coop do duty for two.

The remedy is simple: Get another coop. If no other coop can be had to take what poultry is ready it is generally a comparatively easy matter to keep the extra fowls over until the next time a shipment is to be made, or until another coop can be obtained. This seems simple enough, and it should be followed as nearly as possible in everyday practice. May we hope that the day is not far distant when public sentiment, as well as common horse sense in the trade, will do away entirely with overcrowding! I repeat that it is bad judgment to overcrowd a coop, as the resulting shrinkage due to dead fowls, and the shabby condition of the birds that survive the terrible ordeal gives rise to certain losses to the shipper nearly every time.

Dressed poultry should always be thoroughly cooled before being packed for shipment. If the weather is cool it does not require long for the animal heat to escape after fowls are killed, and if stock is to be

iced it is essential that plenty of ice is put into every barrel and box, preferably broken into small pieces and scattered from top to bottom with a good layer at each end of the package. Fowls should not be killed and packed while their crops are full, as it not only interferes with their appearance, but also makes them spoil more quickly.

In handling either live or dressed the trade should always remember that it is only the best stock that yields the best returns. How many times have shippers been warned to keep the poor, scrawny and off grade stock at home, and on top of the good advice how often have they loaded up with a lot of fowls that look as if they were the original "scare crows" whose pictures we see in the story books! The author has observed that as a general thing the old, experienced shippers use more care in getting good stock, and somehow avoid shipping the "umbrella frames" that are to be seen in any large market from time to time. Good, plump, healthy fowls that have been well fed and watered, and not overcrowded in coops or feeding pens will usually bring a premium that pays everybody who handles them, whether shipped live or dressed.

Of late years the business of storing poultry has assumed vast proportions in this country. And well it may, for several million pounds of frozen poultry foots up a tidy sum of money. The same principle that governs all other kinds of produce under refrigeration applies to poultry, i. e., buying at a reasonably low cost, and selling some time later at a price that shows a profit.

But owing to agitation on the part of well meaning, yet often badly informed reformers and health officials, the frozen poultry industry, like the game business, has been almost outlawed in some quarters the past few years. Well directed efforts by organizations like the National Poultry, Butter & Egg Association have done much to correct wrong opinions and head off ill timed legislation resulting from the clap-trap of cheap politicians and from the scare heads in daily papers based upon wrong information in a great many cases.

Dangerous and partisan legislation has been defeated in the nick of time on several occasions, and which legislation was designed to absolutely prevent undrawn poultry of all kinds from being sold. Experienced men in the trade know that such regulations, if enforced, would sound the death knell even of good frozen poultry, for it is next kin to a physical impossibility to keep a fowl after the abdominal cavity has been cut or ruptured, as infection sets in quickly and works more rapidly than when the "sealed package" that Dame nature puts up is preserved intact. Such a blow aimed at the poultry trade would certainly work an injury to the general public, for it would seriously complicate the question of sup-

plying the larger markets with poultry if the sale of undrawn stock were declared illegal.

A lot of utter nonsense has been foisted on the public about storage poultry being kept for five or ten years, and then sold for fresh. If any one who may be entirely ignorant of produce matters would reflect for a moment on this proposition he would see that the items of storage charges, insurance and interest on the money invested in the stock kept for so long awhile would run away with the prospective profit to say nothing of the original capital involved in an undertaking of this kind. Those who know the game of storage poultry can verify the fact that it is rare, indeed, for frozen poultry to be carried longer than eighteen months or two years at the outside. Generally speaking, poultry comes out of the coolers within six or eight months, and often within two or three months after the time it is put in.

It would help to relieve the public unrest on the subject if it could be advertised widely that as a general thing the object in putting poultry under refrigeration is to hold it temporarily for a profit, and not to render it unfit for human food as many good people have been lead, or mislead, to believe.

And for this unfortunate condition of affairs many people in the trade have themselves alone to blame. There can be no doubt that much of the agitation we have heard has been caused from the acts of certain unscrupulous dealers in years gone by who were so unprincipled as to palm off stock for canning purposes after being treated with such chemicals as formaldehyde, when they knew full well the stock was spoiled or soured, and that it could not be used for any other purpose. But to the credit of the trade it should be stated there is now less of this business going on. Poultry men know that as a general thing only the canners will take the inferior stock, and they are relied upon to use most of the No. 2 poultry.

Without reserve I feel safe in saying that the honest, intelligent element in the poultry trade will bear me out in the statement that No. 2 poultry has been the most costly to the trade, in raising all the hue and cry for "blue laws" to kill the frozen poultry business.

Unless the trade shows a disposition to be fair with the public the author is apprehensive that there is danger ahead on the score of hostile legislation,—municipal, state and even national, for it should be noted that Uncle Sam is already laying plans and framing laws to stop the sale of bad poultry. It would be unfortunate to have this great business, as legitimate as the making of hats and shoes, tied up, crippled and maybe strangled to death, because of the sins of a few unprincipled scoundrels here and there who would apparently feed people rank poison if they



**STANDARD SINGLE LAYER ROASTER STYLE PACK; 24 BIRDS IN 2 LAYERS; BOTTOM LAYER  
HEADS AND FEET UP, TOP LAYER HEADS AND FEET DOWN; ALL HEADS  
WRAPPED IN PARCHMENT PAPER AND PAPER BETWEEN LAYERS**





DRY PICKED POULTRY; FOWL AT LEFT IS A CORRECTLY DRESSED BROILER WITH WINGS  
TUCKED BACK; CENTER BIRD IS POORLY FINISHED, WHILE THE ONE  
AT THE RIGHT IS A CORRECTLY DRESSED ROASTING CHICKEN

could make a few dollars thereby. The trade should set itself to work to see that safe and sane regulations are passed and enforced to protect the great consuming public against unwholesome, infected poultry. This can be done, and will have to be done sooner or later, if not by the trade, then by the public, for it can be set down as a reasonably safe bet that an awakened public sentiment will demand and secure a remedy which will be effective. Some of the poultry trade are getting a delayed reprimand for sins committed several years ago.

It is the swing of the pendulum I fear. Unless a proper remedy of a sensible nature is applied, it is not improbable that an erratic, destructive scheme of legislation will turn everything upside down for a while. There is no use bandying words and quibbling in fancied security coming from having the trade united to defeat what we may be pleased to call "revolutionary laws." The trade is powerful, I must concede, but at the same time a united front of the poultry and game interests is but a straw when compared with a united PUBLIC. It is the merest folly to hope against plans being devised to eliminate bad poultry from market channels in this country. The people are right in their demands on this score.

At present it appears no final provisions as to proper methods of handling good poultry under refrigeration can be established. Just what effect the cells of poultry and other meats undergo from protracted refrigeration does not seem to be well established among bacteriologists. It is known, however, that hard freezing has a tendency to "break down" the cells, and after coming out of the coolers we know poultry will not keep so long as when fresh killed. No one has attempted to dispute that good poultry can under proper conditions be frozen and afterwards thawed out and eaten without harm, though it is not so tasty as if fresh killed. In fact, the process of freezing actually improves the digestibility of some fowls by making the meat more tender. These are well established facts.

To deduce a sort of axiom: Good poultry is little or no worse, if no better, for having been frozen if used soon after being thawed; whereas, bad poultry is no better for being frozen, no matter how or when it is frozen or thawed, and if you will pardon me, without the slightest regard as to who owns the stock or does the freezing or thawing or treating with chemicals, or putting fresh blood on it to give it a fresh appearance.

Bad poultry, like bad money, is dangerous and eventually the most expensive to those who handle it. Both should be suppressed for the common good, and if a penitentiary sentence is the last resort to suppress either or both, I am willing and ready to register an "aye" vote to clear the atmosphere, the landscape and even the storages wherever necessary.

It is hard to say if pure carelessness or pure cussedness is most largely responsible for the bad poultry that has given so much trouble heretofore. Ignorance of men who undertake to prepare and pack poultry for storing has, no doubt, given rise to much unnecessary trouble. By this I do not mean to convey the impression that poultry men are all numskulls, for it is a fact that many intelligent men are in the business.

On the other hand, there are quite a few who do not really know the essentials of handling meats, and who make blunders that seem appalling to those who are "on to their jobs," to use a curbstone expression. Obviously, those handling frozen poultry should be very careful of every detail. Methods should be improved generally. Cleanliness is a cardinal virtue, and it applies with double force to preparing poultry for storing. On the face of it this looks paradoxical, but I defy any man to disprove the fact that as a general proposition packing plants and feeding stations can be greatly improved from a hygienic standpoint. The water supply for fowls before being killed, should be free of poisonous impurities, and only clean water should be used for rinsing, scalding or dressing poultry.

Clean packages are also important. After poultry is packed ready for shipment every care should be used to keep it out of reach of filthy stench and swarms of flies that are too often found about dressing plants. It makes a wonderful difference in the keeping of poultry if it is set aside temporarily and kept in pure atmosphere at a cool temperature as compared with dumping packages in a hot warehouse or next to a stable where putrefaction is invited in a dozen different ways, and where it is sure to begin from some one of them.

There may be some people who will resent the foregoing, and who will say "what is the difference if the stock sells for as much?" I hardly feel that this class of chumps really is entitled to a reply, for generally speaking, such people are moral degenerates who do not care for anything but the coin, though it may come coated with a dead man's blood. He is a public enemy who undertakes to feed the public with bad food, and it matters little if the food is bad through negligence or carelessness, or whether it is rendered impure on purpose or by accident. The evil results are quite the same in all cases. Let's make no mistake about this.

It is altogether likely that whatever regulations are eventually put into effect to secure the proper handling of storage poultry will go to the source of supply, and enforce proper handling of the fowls, even when they are being fattened. There is a broad shouldered doubt if "milk feeding," as a general proposition, is not improperly done. The "cramming" process may be a hot bed of trouble before we are much older.

About the actual process I shall say little, as it is a technical point, and I purposely steer away from mooted technical questions.

Incubators have come into such general use that it seems their importance to the poultry trade must not be overlooked. By taking a surface inspection of the business we little dream what a vast significance these devices have to the commercial poultry industry. That incubators make the business so extensive none can deny, for possibilities are opened up by their use that would never be dreamt of otherwise.

Since we are concerned mainly in this chapter with the marketing end of the poultry deal it would be out of place to consume much time with fancy breeds. But nothing is good or bad except by comparison. In order to form some idea of scrub stock we find it necessary to have a look over the aristocracy of the feathered world, and scan the Minorcans, the Wyandottes, the Brahmins, the fine turkeys, ducks and geese that have aspirations to be included in the "Four Hundred" class of fowls. These elite birds are good mostly for show purposes and to sell. Some of them possess excellent commercial features, however, and it is about these we are chiefly concerned. Once upon a time game chickens were looked upon mainly as fighters, but somebody conceived the idea of crossing them with the scrubs, and it was found that the infusion gave rise generally to a better class of layers, as well as a more hardy fowl. Yet it has been known for a long time that the Plymouth Rock is probably the best all around commercial chicken.

The main point I want to stress is that a studied effort should be made to develop new strains of stock for all purposes. Those who are interested in the marketing of poultry may be able to advance some practical ideas of direct benefit to those engaged in raising fancy poultry, and vice versa. It is only by concerted effort that varieties can be improved, for nobody has any monopoly on ideas in the poultry business any more than in architecture, or in any other sphere of human activity. A careful comparison of records relating to different tests about the keeping qualities of various fowls, the prices obtained for certain stock, the time and cost of fattening,—are all items that are worthy of consideration, and they are as broad and deep subjects as you want to make them.

Reference was made in a former chapter to the subject of the seemingly unfair transportation rate on poultry when compared with the rate on dressed beef and other packing house products closely resembling poultry. The explanation of this is quite clear. Poultry men have not been organized like the meat packers. Mainly just because the railroads had it in their power to put dressed poultry in the first class with no car lot minimum in trunk line territory and charge fifteen per cent. of the actual

weight of a shipment for the ice used in protecting the shipment, they enforced this system. Concerted efforts among the trade will no doubt be directed towards a remedy for these and other transportation abuses and disadvantages that the trade has met, and is still complaining of.

Live poultry cars make up a subject that is altogether a live one for the trade. Why the railroads cannot be expected to furnish these cars as a part of their necessary equipment is hard to see. It seems that these cars of special pattern hold the real solution of getting large lots of live poultry through quickly on a long haul. Their use has demonstrated their worth, and it looks as if some heed should be given by the transportation interests to the urgent demands of the trade that this special equipment be furnished just as refrigeration is now furnished by all important lines as a necessary part of the needs of modern transportation. It is up to the poultry trade to make the effort to get this equipment direct.

In view of the fact that poultry comes from widely separated sections of the country, it necessarily follows that transportation questions must always be of prime importance to the poultry people. These problems must be studied carefully, and when proper remedies for existing evils, or improvements upon existing practices, shall have been worked out, the best interests of the trade dictate that concerted effort be made to put them into effect.

Note.—Those who may be interested in the strictly technical end of selecting, feeding, dressing and packing poultry for market should get a copy of "Poultry Packer's Guide" of Pool Publishing Co., Mason City, Ia., or "Feeding Chickens for the Packing House" of E. R. Shoemaker, Waterloo, Ia.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### APPLES

The apple has been called the King of Fruits, and there is but little doubt that the name is well chosen. Yet, despite the regal sway the apple holds in the realm of fruits, it should be observed that it is also the most democratic kind of fruit, and paradoxical as it may seem the apple obtains its aristocracy from its very popularity.

And why should not the apple be the most popular and universally used fruit yet discovered? The wide range of varieties in this country covers the entire gamut of flavor and color so far as fruits are concerned.

They run from the Maiden Blush and Benoni in the good old summer time when the breath of June seems to be compounded into them, clear through to the Baldwins, Snows, Pippins, Jonathans, etc., of the fall and winter, when the autumn haze and the frosty air combine to develop a color scheme in these and other late apples as delicate as an October sunset.

In short, the apple may be said to be a child of frost and summer sky, of sun and air,—all blended in nature's laboratory into a strange mingling of sweets and acids producing flavors unknown to other fruits, and colored with green and red and gold! Is it any wonder that an apple in the hands of a woman was given as a reason for the tempting of man beyond resistance when the world was young?

The tempting powers of an apple are great. We see it demonstrated often in the case of the small boy who persists in visiting the neighbor's orchard as he returns with other boys from Sunday School, or from a forbidden visit to the old swimming hole. When the opportunity presents itself he rarely refuses to eat his fill of green apples,—perhaps a dozen or more, although one is usually enough to give a horse the colic, and two perhaps enough to kill an elephant.

There are few counties or even precincts in the United States where apples of some kind cannot be grown. There are few people in every local-

ity who do not consume their quota of apples during the run of the year, provided the apples can be had. Some see little of the fruit except when green; others use it mostly in pies or when baked. But whether from the picturesque orchards of York State, or the miles and miles of Ben Davis in the Ozark region, or even from the vast irrigated stretches in the far west; about all of our apples of fairly good quality under normal conditions find their way into consumption.

However, under the best system of marketing many people are unable to get as many apples as they would like to eat, and at the same time many apples must go to waste when there is anything like a full crop. We shall treat of this phase more fully as the subject unfolds itself.

Producing nearly every year an apple crop ranging from 25,000,000 to 50,000,000 barrels, more or less—nobody knows—it is quite easy to see that the apple gives rise to a great commercial industry both from a growing and a marketing standpoint.

There can be little doubt that the subject of apple growing has been reduced to an almost exact science, for much talent has been employed, and vast sums of money and considerable time consumed in prosecuting researches and experimenting for practical results relating to apple growing. Although the field seems to be thoroughly covered I have no doubt but we shall see some more startling wonders in the horticultural end of the business before many years shall have elapsed than we have witnessed in a half century before. The matter of adapting variety to locality is one that calls for something in the way of genius. As yet we can hardly say that varieties are correctly distributed everywhere, nor evenly divided for best results. In this connection I merely refer to the fact that there will be something worthy of a deep thinker in handling this subject before many more years. It is reasonable to expect many new and better varieties will be developed for different localities.

The study of apple marketing in the past seems to have made but little change in the system of handling the fruit to that which our fathers were accustomed. Numerous books have been published on apple growing, but the author does not recall ever having seen a volume devoted exclusively to apple marketing. Just why so much has been written about apple growing, and so little published of an authentic nature about correct marketing methods is difficult to understand, unless we agree that there is more interest in growing than in marketing. Surely, fruit men realize that it is of little use to produce fine fruit without proper handling from the time the fruit is picked until it reaches the consumer.

Whether it is best to sell fruit in the orchard or to pick, pack and store for later sale, or whether to sell or consign, are all questions of

vital import to successful growers everywhere. The fact that every season brings a different set of conditions in the fruit business makes it hard to tell always just what is best to do, but before we are through with this subject I hope to be able to advance some suggestions that may be helpful to the apple grower and the fruit dealer alike.

The seasons change and so do markets for apples. If there were any such thing as luck I would agree that it plays considerable part in making or losing money in apples. But luck is a poor excuse for losing money, while it may sometimes be a pretty good reason for making a profit, as trusting to luck is about as near real business as some apple men seem to get. Those who trust to luck in apples will generally fare badly, yet it takes a crackerjack to win out every time, even on the best kind of management. However, with correct information about the extent and condition of the crop in different sections of the country every year one can draw a fairly intelligent idea what range of prices is about right to figure on for various classes and varieties of apples.

I am talking about the standpoint of the grower as well as the dealer, for they have much to share in common when it comes to getting prices right, although we have found it often the case in the last few years that the grower has set out every season with a determination to get as much as he possibly could for his apples, while the dealer seemed bent on buying for as little money as possible.

This system is all wrong in principle and causes a clashing of interests that should work in harmony always. Growers make troubles for themselves indirectly when they undertake to force prices too high, as it checks the consumptive demand and re-acts on future prices to an absolute certainty. It may catch the growers a year later, or two years or longer, but they feel it some time. I do not mean to say that all growers are not justified in getting a fair price for their fruit,—one that shows a fair profit on the money invested in their orchards, and for labor expended in spraying, cultivating, picking, packing, etc. Beyond these legitimate expenses, and a fair profit, I cannot see where a grower is justified in demanding much more money. It happens generally that there are not enough fools buying apples to pay too much over and above the "fair" profit to take an entire crop, but it occurs sometimes that a few big buyers go stark crazy and pay out money like a drunken sailor. As a general rule it is due to concerted action among growers in demanding a certain price that holds the market up, and not the stupidity of the majority of buyers in openly walking into the fire. But, of course, the buyers are largely to blame for falling into a trap of this kind and deserve no sympathy for their folly.



Perhaps no class of business men are more like sheep than dealers in apples. Let one buy an important orchard, and it is known in a dozen markets in twenty-four hours, especially if the deal is made early in the season and the price paid is a pretty stiff one. And as soon as these early deals are reported the trade everywhere often takes the position that if one can stand it others must, and so it goes. One or two sales early in the game have been known to have a lasting effect on a season's business. In fact, the big early sales are generally the ones that count in making the market, and once the market is fixed it can be expected to remain firm with possibly slight advances, at least until all fruit is picked, packed and stored.

Markets of all kinds, as we have seen in a previous chapter, are delicate things to tamper with. When business is going along smoothly it is nice to talk about having the situation under control, but your seasoned operator in apples who has watched the deal year in and year out, will tell you it is best not to gamble too strong, but to take a fair profit when it is available, and let the other fellow have a living chance.

The public is fond of apples, but some growers have yet to learn that the public will never consent to be held up in order to enrich any class or coterie of people so long as it is possible to avoid being held up. Hundreds of dealers who have taken a flyer in high priced apples have paid for the experience of trying to work things too high.

Manifestly it is hard to say at what price apples are a good investment from a sane business standpoint, and when they assume every symptom of the type of frenzied finance we see occasionally in the grain pit, it is clear that danger is ahead.

What is high one season may, in truth, be a low figure to pay for apples the next. There should be some means by which safe limits could be indicated to apply every season without absolutely trying to establish prices. It does little practical good so far as the market is concerned to have the dealers and the growers organized in rival camps, the course of whose operations are generally diametrically opposed to each other. Such a system only makes for chaos and uncertainty, when it is obvious that the best interests of grower and dealer are always parallel. It avails little if the growers could force prices up to \$10 per barrel in the orchard, and make the buyers load up and go broke in one year, for who would buy their fruit next year? On the contrary, the better element of buyers know if apples could be forced as low as fifty cents a barrel for good fruit that certain disaster would result to those compelled to take such prices, as it is below the actual cost of production in most localities.



A PICTURE THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF—WENATCHEE APPLES HAVE  
A WORLD WIDE REPUTATION



HARVESTING AND PACKING APPLES—NORTHERN MICHIGAN SCENE

But regardless of prices from the orchard or from the storage as between grower and dealer, there is yet a third person who has a word to say about the price, and he is Mr. Consumer. His is the final word. Too often we hear him blurt out an unceremonious negative when we are looking for him to break his neck to take some more of our "strictly fancy" apples at a strictly fancy price.

The effects of high prices on the apple market are well known. When good eating apples are going to the consumer early in the fall during a normal season at over twenty cents a peck, and unless there is a general wave of prosperity over the country, there is cause for apprehension. Even when everything is literally swimming in prosperity it is possible for business to get a kink that throws the market out of gear over night.

I have seen the deal set in and go through from one end of the season to the other without a quiver or a hiatus in prices, and the situation was constantly in favor of holders. But these occurrences are rare. We may safely count on ups and downs. To keep prices on a correct level to meet any emergency is the part of sensible business men in handling any line of trade. Speculation, as we have pointed out clearly in a former chapter, is usually bad business, and it is hardly worth while to dwell on the folly of trying to beat the apple game by looking always for a big killing. Prospective profits in apples often develop into real losses for somebody.

The fellow who sizes up the situation and takes some nice profits one year may drop them the next year. We hear more or less about apple profits, but apple losses also cut quite a figure even if they are not so well advertised. Many a banker can tell several reasons why apples are good to let alone from a speculative standpoint, for they sometimes have to carry over a loan for a good operator who has a reputation of having inherited the gift of Midas. May I also be permitted to say that we have heard it handed down in trade traditions that some "big guns" in the apple game in times past who had aspirations to bloom into a sort of trust to run the apple deal, went on the rocks and had their little machines shattered into smithereens right at the time they figured the problem had been solved and settled? And some of these unfortunates had ample capital, and what was considered the best talent that money could buy.

The apple industry is a big one, but the country that supports it is bigger. The business is a good one if properly conducted, but is as much dependent upon safe, conservative methods as the handling of drugs or clothing for sure results. The business of handling apples

offers boundless opportunities for the conservative business man, but the rank speculator can lose cash in apples as easily as in Wall Street.

Good judgment is the sine qua non in the apple deal. Both grower and dealer must study the game thoroughly if they expect to stay on the safe side. The up-to-date element in the apple trade takes observations now and then by scanning the horizon all around, and if a squall is scented, this element, which is not characterized so much for being in a majority as for keeping a whole hide, prefers to take a reef in the sails instead of stretching out more canvas, and trying to outrun the storm when it is breaking upon them in all its fury.

In short, the conservative is the only apple man worth while. The day of miracles with apples is past. Professional speculators should be discountenanced, and banished if possible, as they generally cause too much trouble in the apple deal for the small profits they get and the good profits they often keep others from getting. If they could be forced to use their own money, to keep their mouths shut, and to work quietly it might not be so bad, but a few hundred dollars in the hands of a two by four plunger early in the season may be the inception of a campaign that will entail losses running into the hundreds of thousands, and which may put some good houses and well to do growers on the scrap heap forever and a day. This much is certain: No line in the produce business is better for investment and worse for rank speculation than apples.

General remarks in foregoing chapters on grading and packing, and the principles deduced therefrom apply with full force to handling apples. The same may be said about the subject of packages, for the matter of properly packing apples for the purpose of showing the fruit up to the best advantage is of equal importance with the matter of making a package that will stand transportation and keep well in storage.

The comic papers have made threadbare the joke about the farmer putting the small, wormy apples in the middle of a barrel, and dressing the top and bottom off with a layer of nice, showy fruit. Those of us who have had the principle of the joke brought to our attention day after day are sometimes led to ask ourselves if it is possible for a farmer to put up a straight pack. Perhaps it is only charitable for me to refrain from a direct answer to this query.

But it would be unfair to drop this subject here without saying there are many of the more progressive growers nowadays who have found that proper grading and packing is a means of building up a good reputation and making money, and have, therefore, decided upon a different line of action from that made famous, or infamous, by some of their

elders. It may require an optimist to say it, but the author honestly believes from his observation of the subject that honest, straight packing will be more popular among the growers themselves in the future than the past.

Apple packing is at once a science as well as an art. To learn a system of packing is a matter that requires no special genius, but it does call for some exceptional intellect to originate new ideas in packing apples, as is true of other produce affairs.

Perhaps for many years to come the barrel will continue to be the favorite package in eastern territory, and the box will be used for most western apples. There are many reasons why this statement is well founded. The sanction of usage is stronger than statute law. Barrels are more easily obtained in the eastern territory than in the west. Box material, on the contrary, is more abundant in the west than in the east.

Opinions differ as to which package is best for all around use. Both have special features that are desirable for certain purposes. Neither can hardly be called a perfect package, for perfection is a quality that is not attributable to any feature of produce.

The movement begun in the trade to adopt a standard box and a standard barrel is a good one, and should be pushed to the logical conclusion. It would seem that this matter would have been settled long ago. To have barrels in use that hold eleven pecks, and others that hold only ten pecks is bound to result in confusion. The same may be said of the difference in the dimensions between the box used in Colorado as compared with the box used in Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. These official standards cannot be established too soon, nor can they be adhered to any too closely.

Trade terms should be specific, and above all, should be honest in their theory and practice. If it develops that the sizes of barrels and boxes need to be varied for proper packing of different sizes or varieties of fruit it is a comparatively easy matter to fix upon a system to cover these differences, and once the trade becomes accustomed to the differences there should be no trouble to transact business on the various bases covered by the range in size of barrel or box.

Again the matter of official weight to be contained in a barrel or box of different varieties is too often a mooted question. This laxity in fixing upon a proper standard gives rise to uncalled for excess charges for transportation. If it is necessary the U. S. Department of Agriculture should make some investigations as to the actual weights of apples, and help the various states to fix laws that would be more accurate than the slipshod system now in vogue.

To go into any elaborate discussion of varieties regarded staple by the trade would be more in the field of horticulture than in the scope of a treatise devoted to the marketing end rather than to the growing of fruits. However, there are some things that ought to be said about varieties in this chapter, and we cannot well omit all comment or suggestions.

Of the different kinds of apples there is no end apparently. An old fruit grower who has devoted most of his time and thought to apples told the author a few years ago he had flattered himself on several occasions to believe he knew every variety of apples in the United States, but as soon as he got himself to the point he thought he had tab on all the different varieties some new strain would bob up and show him there is always something new under the sun, at least with respect to the different varieties of apples.

Quite a lot of amusement was caused by a bit of pseudo-social gossip which went the rounds about a decade ago, and which personated the different varieties of apples. It ran something like this;

"The Duchess of Oldenburg, who was a fair lady, was engaged to be married to a young army officer, Captain Rolfe Vandevere. It was announced in June that the marriage would take place in Early Harvest.

But Lady Minkler, who had become enamored of the captain, employed a Northern Spy to take a Horse to Greenville and confer with the Primate of Lankford, and endeavor to have him intercede with King McIntosh to secure a leave of absence for the captain, so that he could spend a vacation shooting on her estate in the Wolf River country near the confluence with the St. Lawrence in Ontario.

The Primate was indisposed, and referred the emissary to a Faimuese Dominie named Ivanhoe, who was generally intoxicated with Canada Red Wine. Being unsuccessful in his efforts the Spy returned to his Lady employer bearing an exquisite Belleflower that would make any Maiden Blush with envy.

Before further action was possible the captain, who was a Wealthy Mann, was out for a jaunt, and being tired sat on a Stump near Cooper's Market drinking Smith's Cider, and while resting he was struck by a Mammoth Black Twig, which he Swaars was wielded by Walter Pease, who had become jealous over the captain's attentions to Caroline R., a famous Western Beauty, who was a daughter of the well known Arkansas Black Senator. Dr. Baldwin was hastily summoned and after an examination of his patient a consultation was held with Dr. Gravenstein, and they decided to remove the patient to Lowell for an operation.

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News of the felonious assault spread, and the suspect confessed the time. He escaped to Spitzenberg where he found Scott's Winter as disagreeable as he had heard. His only recreation was reading the papers from Pewaukee and his sole companion was Sitovka Arabskoe Tetofsky, a famous Russian nihilist in exile. This made him Stark

o a  
 The captain recovered slowly, and he was removed to the home of Colonel Porter, and later to Hotel Salome where Bismarck formerly stayed. Upon his recovery both the fair contestants began laying plans to monopolize the young officer's attentions. Delicacies like Chenango Strawberries, Jersey Sweet pears, Winter Bananas and Saps of Wine were sent by both ladies daily.

R. I. Greening, who was a boyhood friend of the captain's, insisted that he break with the two lovers, and devote his attention to a Miss Crabb, a niece of the Honorable Pearmain Walbridge, a well known financier and ship owner. But this young lady had previously been engaged to a young man named Ben Davis, who Haas a Delaware Red complexion and who had followed the course of Alexander in conquering the world of femininity, and then began weeping because there was nothing more to subdue. In his York Imperial sway Davis had encountered Jonathan Wagner, a shrewd attorney, who had designs on the young Heiress himself.

The captain having decided to discard his erstwhile lovers, realized he had a difficult undertaking ahead of him in dealing with the two rivals for the hand of the rich heiress, and he observed that only a paragon could hope to win out eventually. He accordingly procured a Red Astrachan with Stars on the collar and lapels, so as to give a soldierly air to his dress. He purchased a necklace of Opalescent pearls of Baxter, the jeweler, a lover's talisman called "Nonesuch" from a fakir, provided himself with a bouquet of Sweet Boughs, a volume of Belle de Boskoop's poems, a copy of the old painting "Walker's Beauty" and set out to see his lady fair. His reception was cordial and his conversation was Golden Sweet. He pushed his case and soon proved himself the victor, as cards were out shortly announcing the engagement. At the marriage Gideon Ewalt was best man and Miss Benoni Boiken Hubbardson was bridesmaid.

To make a complete romance the two rivals for the hand of the young heiress met the two rivals who had sought to become the wife of the captain and matches resulted between Lady Minkler and Jonathan Wagner, and between the Duchess of Oldenburg and Ben Davis.

The captain and his fair young wife arranged a wedding tour for



the three couples together, and plans were fixed to leave by Maxon's Early tour for Peck's Pleasant hotel at Pippin, a Newtown in Switzerland, where the Roses Bloom and Talman's Sweet violets grow the year round in the valleys where the Transparent brooks mingle their songs with the sounds of birds and lowing herds.

The party had a great time climbing mountains skirted with Russet forests, and found the Snows of many winters on the craggy peaks nearby. With the exception of Ben Davis, who is consumptively inclined, all the party voted the trip the greatest event of their lives."

From the foregoing it is plain to see that there are nearly one hundred varieties of apples that are not uncommon, although less than half this number constitute the bulk of the fruit we generally find handled in our markets. It has been said among some well informed apple men that outside of twenty to twenty-five varieties there is little of commercial interest.

The old standbys for winter fruit such as Baldwins, Greenings, Spys, Russets, Kings, Pippins, Twenty Ounce, Spitzenbergs, Jonathans, Ben Davis, etc., claim first attention. Other varieties are usually referred to as being "odd," and the term is well used. Perhaps a hundred different varieties have been lost track of and forgotten in the history of fruit growing in this country.

For a variety to survive it must be a good apple in appearance and flavor; it should also be a good keeper and should be capable of being produced at a nominal cost. Everything considered, it is not improbable that if a correct expression of opinion could be had from leading apple men not swayed by prejudice in some way, that the Baldwin would be found the favorite as an all around apple in barrels, and Jonathans in boxes. But different markets and varied trade requirements demand different varieties, and it is true that an assortment must be handled to get best results.

Perhaps in this connection some comment on the Ben Davis apple will not be out of place, although the author realizes he is in danger of "treading on the tail of somebody's coat" when he speaks his honest sentiments in regard to this apple, as he believes there are more people deluded as to the real merits or demerits of this variety than were ever able to get a correct idea as to its real value.

I shall try to refrain from knocking poor old Ben; he has been knocked enough by those who have tried to get "freight charges" out of him when the markets are glutted. It is a well known fact that the Ben Davis is a good keeper, but an apple salesman once told the author pointedly that this quality should never be argued in favor of the Ben



UNLOADING APPLES FROM WAGON—KANSAS APPLE SCENE



A HOOD RIVER, OREGON, APPLE EXHIBIT

Davis, for said he "We want an apple to sell and not to keep." Of course, he was only half right. But the Ben Davis is absolutely powerless as an apple to overcome the half of the objection implied in the salesman's remark. That is, the Ben Davis is utterly and absolutely lacking in some of the essential qualities that go to make a desirable apple. True, the Ben Davis is of good color, but the *flavor* is not there, and no amount of quibbling and false logic can make it compare with other better fruit. The strongest proof of this is found in the prices that usually prevail. Now, there is little sentiment in an American dollar. The markets adjust themselves sooner or later. The good, desirable varieties of apples, like good securities, go at a premium. You cannot get away from this fact. It is only in rare cases that we see a Ben Davis selling at top prices. Why?

The author is one of an increasing number in the trade who really believes a mistake has been made among many western fruit people in planting such an enormous acreage to Ben Davis apples. The trees thrive, the yield is generally good and the fruit can usually be moved at something like a profit. But if a variety of a better apple had been substituted for part of the acreage planted to Ben Davis it is the opinion of numbers of men that the aggregate profits from apple growing in the west would have been higher during the past ten years, and would be even higher in the future than are now in prospect. It is clear that some of the leading growers recognize this is true. Sentiment, I presume, causes some of them to deny the fact.

But it seems the Ben Davis apple will be a bone of contention to the end of time. It is difficult to predict what the final status of this apple will be from a commercial standpoint. Poor old Ben! He was idolized once upon a time as a hero, and like the people are fond of doing, he was probably set upon a pedestal only to be knocked down and forgotten. Those who have strewn flowers in his pathway, and shouted hosannas in his name may be the very ones who will yet deride him most bitterly and cry out the loudest to crucify him. We can never tell what people will do, especially those who grow Ben Davis apples. Let us hope if they ever make a change in selecting a variety to substitute for Ben Davis they will use good judgment and get a better apple; they could hardly get one that is worse.

Those who own Ben Davis orchards and who may like this apple because it has been fairly profitable sometimes, and who may be disposed to condemn the author for his alleged strictures on old Ben, should bear in mind that the author is speaking from the standpoint of the whole, and not from that of the individual. It is far from my intention to say

that the Ben Davis apple has not made some money, but it has also lost some money to its promoters, to growers, for it has lost them the opportunity to get a real apple in the place of a roll of pulp in a coat of Morocco. Let us change the subject to a more pleasant theme.

In view of the fact that during the past quarter of a century there has been such a marked increase in the number of apple trees in the United States it is quite natural that the question of possible overproduction is one that claims some attention from a strictly commercial standpoint.

Before one can even attempt to answer the query: Is there real danger of overproduction of apples in the United States? it is necessary to consider a great many collateral factors, and perhaps qualify either a negative or affirmative answer with a half dozen conditions, for it is certain there are two sides to the question.

Beyond doubt there are too many inferior apples grown in this country. Quality is the great desideratum in the apple deal as in the case of other fruits. A great many apples that are put on sale every year in all our markets are often of more harm than good to the trade generally. There are many reasons why this is true. The very presence of a bad apple on any market has a demoralizing effect, just as in the case of a decayed apple if kept among sound fruit for a short while. Those who are accustomed to watching the markets closely know that sharp breaks in prices are due in a majority of cases to an overload of poor, indifferent stock. There must be a heavy reduction in prices to move inferior apples when the market is oversupplied. Good stock suffers through sympathy when these slumps come from an excess of poor fruit.

But we must have some No. 2 apples, say the devotees of the bulk apple deal. It is quite true that a certain class of trade must have a low grade apple and cannot use any other. But here is where the danger lies, and whence comes trouble so often. In trying to supply this class of trade the effort is too successful; the markets are clogged up and demoralized. For the past few years individual growers appear to have done a little more real thinking on this subject and have come to the conclusion they have been too zealous in putting inferior stock on sale. Credit for improvement can hardly be attributed to good judgment so much as to heavy losses that have been occasioned from time to time by "saving at the spigot and wasting at the bung," as it were, which is certainly what the process of "packing everything" is when followed by so many growers.

Obviously there should be some plan devised to determine what per



centage of stock of undergrade apples should be placed on sale in competition with better stock. It is the opinion of many experienced apple men that two-thirds or three-fourths of the poor stock should be used only for drying, canning, evaporating, cider or for other by-products instead of shipping to market to be sold to supply paupers and peddlers. No doubt many growers are blind to the actual quality of their fruit. Just because they grow and pack a lot of No. 2 stock will not serve to make buyers pay one cent above the market for it. We have observed how totally devoid of sentiment is the American dollar. It is notably true as applied to inferior apples.

It is neither desirable nor possible to shut out all undergrade apples, for that would make it hard on some of the people to get any apples at all. But in order to supply this class of trade it is unwise to injure that other branch that uses better stock. There is the rub. I insist there should be a remedy worked out for this vexed problem of dealing with the over-supply of poor apples. How best to do it I shall not attempt to say. But there will be a way found in the course of a few years, and the man or set of men who are sensible enough to set the scheme in operation will be hailed as benefactors to the trade and the country generally.

It can be done without injury or inconvenience to anyone, but with positive benefit to those who invest their money, time and thought in the handling of apples, and who are entitled to every reasonable safeguard to protect them against losses due to haphazard methods. There has been a woeful lack of system in handling poor apples. Both growers and dealers are to blame for this condition of affairs and the remedy lies between these two. Neither can put the remedy into effect without the co-operation and consent of the other.

With respect to the better grades of apples we need hardly take more than a word to explain that there never has been and probably never will be a real overproduction of apples. That is, when good apples are sold at reasonable prices and are kept moving. This statement is, of course, predicated on the assumption that the country is in a flourishing condition. When business is bad, as it must be at times, it seems a few apples will go a long way. But remedy the frequent over supply of inferior stock, cut out crack brained speculation and there should never be any trouble in dealing with *good apples*. The people of this country have come to realize that the apple is a good thing to eat, and under normal conditions our people will spend money on things beneficial in so many ways as good apples are.

This naturally suggests the question: How may the demand for

good apples be stimulated? Can the quantity consumed be increased if a consistent campaign of advertising is followed out? Is a national apple day necessary to improve the demand throughout the country? These questions certainly furnish food for thought. No one who has studied the situation carefully will feel disposed to discount the possibilities of extending the demand for apples. What has been done in the case of western boxed fruit the past few years furnishes a good example of the possibilities in judicious advertising. But advertising can only supplement *quality*; it can never supply it or take its place. Once get the right quality and call attention to it, and the job is well nigh complete with the energy that the trade shows in pushing things.

The author deems it both feasible and expedient for the trade to raise and use a fund to promote an advertising campaign for the purpose of educating the public regarding the benefits of eating apples. This could be done at a small cost to the thousands of people who devote most of their time to growing and marketing apples. Properly handled the results should be highly satisfactory. A comparatively small fund of a few thousand dollars would make a beginning in a round of publicity that would be calculated to develop amazing returns if the scheme is kept up and vigorously pushed from time to time.

A campaign of publicity to enlighten apple growers would be as desirable as to educate the general public. Hardly more than one out of every hundred fully realizes the importance of careful spraying and proper care of orchards. The percentage of those who take care of their orchards is no doubt increasing, but much remains to be done in order to get apple growing on the proper basis all over the country. The far west has set a good example and the premium that most western fruit commands is sufficient to justify the prediction that the moral effect will not be lost, for our people generally will go your way if you show them they can make money by doing so.

Those of us who have devoted any time to thinking over the proposition realize that a rigid spraying law is inevitable in a large portion of the United States in the near future if fruit growing, especially apples, is to continue an important and profitable industry. In a given locality a majority of growers may be progressive and take the best care of their orchards, going to considerable trouble and expense every season, only to have their work rendered useless by a few careless, lazy owners who allow their orchards to become hot beds for the development and spread of diseases and pests. Therefore, the edict of universal, intelligent spraying is soon to become a reality everywhere.

Those who refuse to keep abreast of the times will simply have to drop out of the game, for the element that aims at being progressive and prosperous cannot afford to be hampered and held back by a few drones. The matter of compulsory spraying has already been delayed too long; early action will help to prevent further losses to those who have investments in large fruit farms as well as those owning single orchards.

Perhaps some remarks should be devoted to the subject of our export trade before this chapter is finished. It is conceded, as we shall see in another chapter, that as a general rule our main concern in foreign markets is to take care of our surplus. Of course, there is nearly always a good demand in some European markets for a certain quantity of fine stock from this country, but the amount of apples of any kind that can be moved across the water to good advantage is a mere bagatelle compared with the immense amount of stock consumed in our own country. In a word, the export trade in apples is purely an incident in comparison with the traffic in domestic markets. More or less stock has been going from the far west to points in the orient the past few years, and that trade promises to show a healthy increase as time goes on.

Apple by-products constitute an altogether interesting and important feature of the business of growing and handling the fruit. Were it not for canning, cider making, evaporating, drying, making jams, jellies, butter, brandies, vinegar, etc., it would be a difficult job to find profitable use for much of the undergrade stock every year. This is especially true during a season when apples are plentiful. For the past few years there has been complaint among the dealers in by-products that not enough stock can be had for their purposes. At the same time we find the dealers in the green fruit complaining that they have too much poor trashy stock. Obviously, the solution of the problem is to divert the poor fruit to its proper use. It is up to the growers to do this.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### POTATOES

No extended argument is necessary, I am sure, to establish the fact that the handling of potatoes in a wholesale or jobbing way is a branch of the produce business that is entitled to rank as a specialty. And by potatoes we mean the common tuber, because of reasons we shall see before going far into the subject.

When looked at from any standpoint we are bound to conclude that the volume of business transacted in handling old and new potatoes during a year ranks favorably if not actually ahead of any other single item in the fruit or vegetable line so far as the value is concerned. It is a difficult matter, of course, to form any definite idea about the enormous trading that is done in potatoes during a twelvemonth until we consider the fact that no other commodity is more widely used as a food product, and is so capable of as many styles of serving as the prosaic spud.

On nearly every bill of fare in nearly every restaurant or hotel we find potatoes included with practically all meat orders, and it would be a poor sort of eating establishment that could not serve German fried, French fried, au gratin, shoe strings, mashed, hashed, boiled or baked potatoes along with any kind of meal.

And what potatoes are eaten in the tens of thousands of restaurants and hotels throughout this country are as a mere handful when compared with the millions of homes of the rank and file of our people whose members must have a substantial diet, and who rely upon the potato as the best and cheapest all around dish for their purposes. As a rule people tire of almost any given article of food when they have it practically every day, but it seems that the potato is an exception to the general rule for it is eaten almost daily by a large majority of our people—the banker, the bricklayer, the minister, the moulder, the teacher, the teamster—all are devotees of the succulent spud to a greater or lesser extent.

Were it not that we are concerned principally with the marketing end of the potato deal the author would feel inclined to go into this subject more fully and try to show why potatoes have become such a staple food product in this country. Suffice it to say, that during a greater portion of the year potatoes are cheap, and this must be conceded to be a great factor in their wide use, for any food product to be widely used must be moderate in cost. But over and beyond the item of price there seems to be a preference shown potatoes by the American people that is hardly shared by any other vegetable. Whether or not this preference actually exists, could better be discussed under a strictly scientific head than we can well take up in this work, although we may not find it amiss to note this matter of preference in passing, for it can easily be seen that such a preference may give rise to some very important considerations from a strictly marketing or commercial standpoint.

Those with even an inkling of the produce business know that the potato deal is classified under two distinct divisions,—the old and the new. At a glimpse it is plain to see what these divisions imply, and those who may not be familiar with the ins and outs of the business cannot do better than follow the English, as the words "old" and "new" are employed in designating the two deals in their strictest possible sense.

Old potatoes are those which are kept for a considerable time in cellars, pits or warehouses after harvesting in the fall before putting on the market, while new potatoes are marketed and put into consumption soon after being dug in the spring. It is scarcely necessary to more than state in nearly all northern sections where potatoes are grown in a commercial way the trade have not found it either possible or desirable to market the entire crop as soon as harvested. The fact that the Northern and far Western crop, or at least a large portion of it, can be stored in warehouses, cellars or pits and kept as long as six or eight months makes it possible to feed these potatoes to the consuming public slowly, and at better prices than if they were all forced on the market at once or within a short period of time.

But in the case of new potatoes the situation is entirely different. These are early potatoes, grown for the most part in the South and in the Southwest. They are grown and ripened in the early part of the year when there is more moisture in them than if produced later in the season from the same kind of seed in a higher latitude. Furthermore, they are harvested in warm weather, and this is not conducive to long keeping. Over and beyond this, new potatoes are usually

worth more when they are dug than if kept for any considerable length of time, owing to the inevitable deterioration in quality.

In brief, this serves as a broad distinction between the old deal and the new deal, as the terms are used and understood by the potato trade including both growers and dealers. That there are radical differences in handling the two deals, that there are features which even differentiate the two sometimes so as almost to make them separate lines of business, we shall see as we go on.

The states producing the major portion of our old potatoes from a commercial standpoint are, in the order named, New York, Michigan, Maine, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pennsylvania in the eastern and central part of the country, and California, Colorado, Oregon and Washington in the West.

The average New York yield is estimated to run about 50,000,000 bushels while the Michigan crop, which has been increasing regularly during the last decade, now comes in for a close second at around 40,000,000 bushels.

A great deal of the stock grown in Maine, Wisconsin and Minnesota is used for seed purposes in planting the southern crop, and shipments from these states every season are estimated to run well up into the millions of bushels. But the potatoes required for seed purposes are a very small part of the total output in the states referred to.

In nearly all leading producing sections of the foregoing states there are a great many operators who buy potatoes extensively at harvesting time and make a business of distributing them in a car-lot way during the fall, winter and spring to all parts of the country. At various points where shipping facilities are convenient enormous warehouses are used for storing these potatoes until they need to be shipped out on orders. These warehouses must be frost-proof, so as to protect the potatoes from extreme cold weather in the winter.

The total commercial crop of potatoes in the United States is figured on an average to run somewhere between 400,000,000 and 500,000,000 bushels, and at the average prices on the farm of about 50 cents a bushel throughout the entire country it easily can be seen that the business resulting from growing and handling potatoes is one of enormous proportions.

With respect to the early potato crop in the South and the Southwest we have Texas in the West as the chief producer, with Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas and Louisiana to make up the main portion of the balance in that territory. In the East Virginia easily has first place, and the immense output from around Norfolk and Cape Charles makes

potato growing one of the leading industries in that section. The three counties of Norfolk, Accomac and Northampton, lying in a tier on the seaboard, are credited with an annual average output of around 3,000,000 barrels, and when one stops to figure out at the average price of \$2 to \$3 a barrel during the past few years for which these potatoes have sold at shipping points, it is not difficult to understand the almost unprecedented prosperity which this district enjoys.

While we are treating of these eastern potatoes grown along the middle Atlantic Coast it may not be out of place to refer to the splendid yield in southern Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey which follows right after the Virginia crop, and which is of about the same run of quality. They are usually put up in much the same way as the Virginia potatoes, and appear to have established the growers on an equally profitable basis compared with Virginia. The potatoes grown in New Jersey and also on Long Island are of a larger size and generally sell for a premium if a fancy cooker is desired.

While of less importance from the standpoint of the trade at large throughout the country, it cannot be denied that the production of potatoes in the state of Florida, especially in the Hastings section, is an industry of by no means second importance. These potatoes, owing to the fact that they come on the market at a time when there is no other new stock to compete with them, usually sell at very high prices; it has been estimated that the average price of \$5 to \$6 per barrel at shipping points for practically the entire output of Hastings stock is perhaps the highest price paid for potatoes grown in any part of the United States. The output in that locality is estimated around 2,000,000 bushels annually under favorable conditions.

There are also quite a number of districts in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina where potatoes are produced in a commercial way, but they are of secondary importance as compared with the other early producing sections mentioned along the seaboard further north.

On the Pacific Coast most of the new potatoes that supply markets in that section in the spring and early summer are produced in California, although it frequently happens that coast markets draw supplies out of Texas and Louisiana until their home grown crop is ready to market. The late crop of California amounts to millions of bushels a year.

So far, our attention has been taken up with the variety commonly known as the Irish potato,—more properly, *solanum tuberosum*. But who cares a rap about seeing our old friend, Mr. Spud, dressed up and parading under a long Latin name? Perish the thought. Attention is

directed to this matter chiefly for the reason that many people would think the sweet potato, which is another important consideration in the potato deal, had been discriminated against woefully were no mention made of that kind of potato while we are saying so much about the so-called Irish variety.

And it would be rank discrimination to leave out of account the sweet potato, for it is also a potato and to a greater or lesser extent, a rival of the grandiloquent *solanum tuberosum*. so far as public favor is concerned. Yet in spite of the wide use of the sweet potato, which is a most excellent food product I must admit, it is hardly one, two, three when compared with the Irish potato, old and new, so far as the nation's food supply is concerned. In saying this it may be expedient to be specific in declaring that I have reference only to the volume of business handled and the value involved.

In a large measure sweet potatoes are a delicacy with a majority of our people; Irish potatoes are a necessity. This is not exaggeration, but a plain statement of fact. Thousands of markets throughout the country which hardly handle a car or two of sweet potatoes during the season will probably take a car or two of Irish potatoes every week. In view of this fact it would seem that we are justified in this chapter if we shall refer to Irish potatoes as "potatoes," and sweet potatoes as "sweets." The relative importance of the two kinds of stock appear to make this method of designating them quite proper. If any excuse is necessary for this I have the everyday practice of the trade to offer, which is no more than I have done in the use of the names.

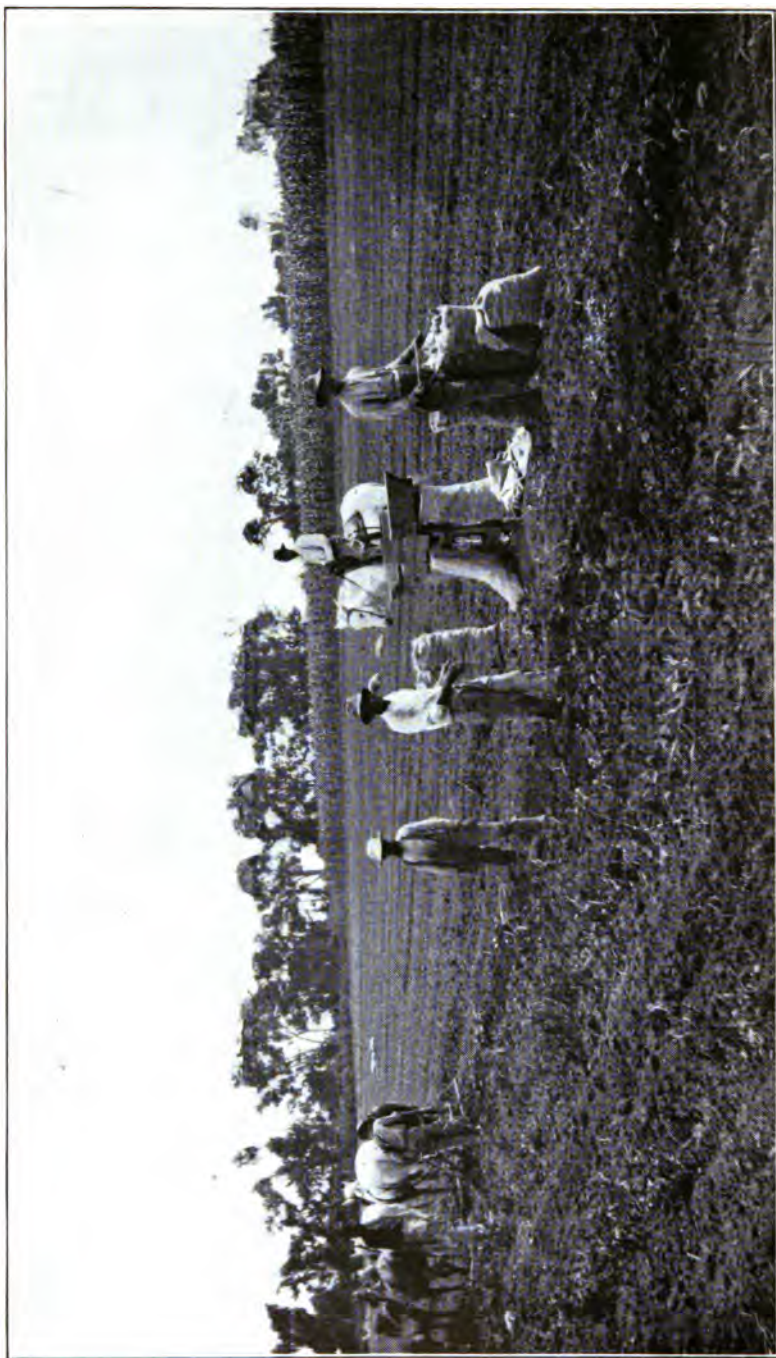
Again the author feels it imperative to branch off from our subject, strictly speaking, and say a word or two about the origin of the potato, for it is amazing how many people are actually engaged in growing and handling potatoes who know little or nothing about the origin of the plant or its history, and since many people in the trade have frequently approached the author for information on the subject he is persuaded to believe a few words might be devoted to the potato's historical aspect without harm to this treatise, or to the reader who may not have been so fortunate as to have been able to get the information from some standard work on the subject.

Strictly speaking, the word potato comes from the Spanish "patata," while the botanical name, *solanum tuberosum*, is adopted from Linnaeus, the famous Swedish botanist. The plant is of the nightshade family, and is indigenous to the plateau regions of North and South America. Early discoverers found the natives in South America cul-



A POTATO FIELD IN NEW YORK STATE—18 ACRES PRODUCED 4600 BUSHELS





DIGGING POTATOES IN THE CANEY VALLEY NEAR WHARTON, TEXAS

tivating this plant, while it grew wild in the mountains, and is still found in the same state over a large area of certain favored sections.

According to some writers on the subject the plant was carried from the western coast of South America to Spain early in the 16th century. So far as authentic records show, the plant was cultivated mainly for its flower, and the Spanish people made little or no use of the potato as an article of food. But for some reason it appears to have been brought from Spain to Virginia about the middle or the latter part of the 16th century.

There is little dispute that the potato was carried to Great Britain by Sir John Hawkins in 1563, although there is some doubt as to the variety of potatoes introduced by Hawkins; Sir Joseph Banks is of the opinion they were sweet potatoes. About 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh took some potatoes from Virginia or the Carolinas to an estate of his near Cork, Ireland. So far as can be learned definitely the first use of potatoes for food purposes was made by Europeans about this time. There is no authentic record to show that they were first eaten in Ireland as some suppose.

The fact that the plant thrived in Ireland and the food became popular is the reason for the name Irish potato, and it is to the Irish that we really owe the potato after all, for how could the plant ever attain importance or respectability enough to be cultivated and cared for if the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle had never taken hold of the potato and proved that it is a fine article of food?

In this connection it should be stated that in an English volume known as "Catalogus" issued by Gerard in 1596, and in a second edition in 1599, we find a description of the potato, the then strange new plant. In Gerard's "Herbal," published in 1597, there was an article entitled "Potatoes of Virginia," which was accompanied with a rough wood cut, and which served to bring the nature of the potato before the English public. From this time on the potato has grown in favor and has become world wide in its use.

Owing to the peculiar nature of the potato plant and its susceptibility to climate and soil conditions, scores and possibly hundreds, of different varieties of the plant have been developed. No doubt many varieties have "run out" and have been lost. Today we find less than twenty-five varieties constitute the bulk of the millions and millions of bushels raised every year by the hundreds of thousands of growers in practically every state in the union. Undoubtedly millions of dollars' worth of business is transacted every year in as few as a half dozen different varieties. It would hardly be fair to omit the statement that



possibly a fourth of the potato business handled in this country depends upon Rurals and Triumphs.

In New England the Green Mountain leads as a table potato for winter use, while for early marketing the following varieties are used in the order named: Irish Cobbler, Early Ohio, Bovee, Early Rose, White Ohio and the Gem of Aroostook.

In the Middle West the favorite early variety is the Early May, while among the leading late varieties are the Washington, Gold Coin, Carman, Whitman's White, Mammoth and Sir Walter Raleigh. Other scattering varieties are found here and there.

In the far West and in the Northwest we find among the early varieties Beauty of Hebron, Early Eureka, Noroton Beauty and the Early Rose and Early Roser, which is not unlike the last named but one, in some respects. Among late varieties the Rural New Yorker is in a class by itself and is easily a favorite. Kings, Burbanks, Carmans, etc. are also found in nearly every section.

In the South and Southwest the new crop is of Triumphs and Cobblers almost entirely, for these varieties have proved to be most satisfactory for all around use. So much for the varieties of the Irish potato.

Of sweets there is a considerable range in varieties. The White Yam is most largely used, taking the country as a whole. The Yellow Yam is also a good potato for the markets that will use them, but it is peculiar the Northern markets have never been able to do much with these delicious morsels, a dry cooker being demanded by the Northern trade. The red "Nigger Killer" is but little heard of or sought after nowadays.

Unlike Irish potatoes which are produced in all parts of the United States, the sweet potato as a commercial proposition is restricted to comparatively few sections. While good sweets may be grown in half the states to advantage it remains true that New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia are relied on mostly for the supply for eastern markets, while Illinois, Iowa and Kansas are the heaviest producers of sweets in the West. In the South where sweets are used more extensively than elsewhere they are cultivated in nearly every locality. But these southern sweets are different potatoes from those grown further north, as they contain more moisture and make a different dish when cooked. Few of them in the south are kiln dried, whereas sweets in the north are generally kiln dried, graded, barrelled and handled on a different basis entirely.

Reverting to the marketing phase of Irish potatoes, we can hardly consider a more important feature of the subject than the matter of

handling in bulk as compared with 100 pound or 150 pound sacks. Once there was little sacking; now it is so common and is such a popular way of handling them that it seems only a question of time when all spuds will be sacked. As between 100 pound and 150 pound sacks for most markets the argument seems to lie with the former, mainly for two reasons: First, the lighter sack is the more easily handled, and second, most potato bags are second hand, and are therefore not so strong as new bags. It is plain that a bag likely to be weaker than if new should not be loaded with too much weight. Another thing in favor of sacking is the fact that a car of stock is much easier to inspect and handle either in loading or unloading, and the shrinkage is reduced to a minimum when stock is sacked. For the Virginia, Maryland and Delaware stock barrels are used altogether.

Among all shippers of northern potatoes the matter of lining box cars, and firing cars by means of stoves in frosty weather is a subject of deep interest always.

The styles of lining are numerous, but mainly consist of an inner frame of scantling built within a box car which is coated with thick paper or cardboard so as to make an air chamber in the middle of the car, which must be looked after by an attendant while in transit.

It is one of the anomalies of the potato shipping business that the railroads have not been compelled to fix up these lined cars. To properly line a car requires an outlay of about \$25. But when a shipper lines a car early in the season he is usually entitled to the use of the car back and forth during the winter, although some of the roads allow the cars to be "swiped" while being returned as empties. However, most of the roads nowadays reimburse shippers for the loss they have sustained when one of their cars is "lost" by virtue of being stolen. But some of them are slow about making settlement for "lost" cars.

Before closing with the strictly commercial phases of the potato deal the author had in mind some suggestions and criticisms relating to certain methods and practices generally found among the trade handling potatoes.

First, the matter of correct, honest grading is one that will bear lots of talking about, for it is a source of trouble if not properly carried out.

Those who know how to put up potatoes as they should be and will not, are to be censured. Those who want to assort and load properly, but who may make serious unintentional errors ought to be borne with and taught better, for there can be no doubt that they need sympathy and education.

Potato grading, so far as the old stock is concerned, is a very simple matter. A wire screen with meshes of certain size, usually  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " or 2" square, is used for the potatoes to run over and if handled conscientiously there is small chance for a mistake in getting them properly put up. The main trouble with many growers and shippers is that they want everything they ship to be called "fancy," and to bring fancy prices.

Carelessness is also the cause of much complaint over improper grading. Many a shipper who has had a rejection in a distant market could have prevented trouble in nine cases out of ten if he had taken reasonable precautions to see that the stock he shipped was what he sold. I am aware that the status of the market at destination when a car arrives has a whole lot to do with taking up a draft attached to a bill of lading, as shipments are usually made, but unless stock is up to grade there will be trouble with a majority of receivers. Further than to say that official grades should be established, and strictly adhered to, it would seem that further comment is unnecessary, particularly with those who have had their fingers burned and got the worst of a deal when they sold "fancy" stock and tried to deliver a bad "choice" or something worse. They are generally wiser for their costly experiences.

To those familiar only in a general way with the handling of southern new potatoes it would seem strange to see anything like this chapter without some comments on the carelessness and often downright crookedness of some people engaged in that end of the business.

The awful mess so frequently found in sacks of southern stock after being shipped to distant markets is certainly calculated to shake a man's faith in humanity, and there are many dealers who have nearly gone broke importing "real estate" in the form of mud and dirt that was unquestionably put into the sacks by somebody to perpetrate a swindle as raw and rank as any thief who robs a hen roost or snatches a purse. The idea of finding lumps of mud in lots of sacks as large as a man's head is revolting in the superlative degree.

Of course, all shippers are not in this dishonest class. God forbid. But there are too many. It would be useless to try to enumerate them, but just so many as they are, by so many too many are they. And you can rest assured they know their number each and every one,—growers, shippers and all. It cannot and is not possible that 10 to 25 pounds of dirt and mud could get into a sack, and so many of these sacks into so many cars—usually at the ends or placed where they cannot be easily detected—unless somebody knew about it and knew all

about it too. Such despicable methods have done a great deal more than many people suppose to cause trouble. Not only does it result in heavy losses of money that often have serious consequences, but the worst part is that confidence is often destroyed and men who ought to work in harmony are put into warfare, commercial warfare of course, but which has dire effects in the end, for the "dirt" causes fussing and trouble all along the line.

Yes, I know the buyers are partly to blame for the state of things we are talking about. Over-anxiety to get stock, which results in a species of crazy competition, is in a large measure responsible for the grower's crookedness who sells dirt for potatoes. But however foolish and feverish buyers may be it is plain to see that it does not clear the crooked fellow who finds he has the opportunity to be a crook. That is no excuse whatever for the crook. Not by any means, and if there is any retribution, this crook—the fellow who sells dirt for potatoes—should "get his" and I hope he does, for in my candid opinion he is one of the worst kinds of crooks that infests the produce trade, bar none.

And what is the remedy? I am sure I do not know. I only wish I knew an infallible remedy, for I would patent it and not only stop the practice, but would also try to land a few of these crooks in the penitentiary to make examples of them as I have helped to do in the case of some of the more bold and confirmed rascals who set out unmistakably for a steal, but at the same time were game enough to give their victims a run for their money.

One very good plan I think would be to compel every association and car lot shipper of early potatoes to guarantee stock to be free from dirt and mud down to a certain percentage. I know this is difficult to get into operation, for when a sale is made on f. o. b. terms the f. o. b. inspection would usually be final. But why should it? Not every car can be carefully inspected at shipping point by the buyer.

That is a physical impossibility and everyone knows it. The buyer must take the word of somebody else, and right there is where the trouble comes in, for a thief finds it easy to lie.

Often cars of potatoes are bought by wire, and the distant jobber or dealer has no one upon whom to rely for inspection other than the association or car-lot loader from whom he is making purchase. Maybe the car is in transit. It is represented to be such and such stock, and a bank guarantee is probably put up which is equivalent to cash. What recourse is there when the unsophisticated dealer wakes up to find he has had a real job put up on him? In buying what he thought was a car load of potatoes he often finds only about 90% to 95% of a car

of potatoes and the rest plain dirt. Some shippers attempt to excuse themselves by saying mud is inevitable in digging when the ground is wet. That may be true to some extent, but not to the extent we often see in car-lots that show so much dirt.

Were it not for the fact that dirt and mud weigh much more at initial points than at destination this trouble would not be so bad. But when a dealer planks down hard cash for 18,000 or 20,000 pounds of potatoes in a car and gets say 1,800 or 2,000 pounds or more of mud as often happens you see he is getting trimmed all around, for he has to pay freight on the whole business,—paying for stuff he cannot use,—and then planking down long green to the railroads to haul it maybe a thousand miles to him. Of course, when the car is unloaded there is a shrinkage that often takes away what should have been a good profit. There is a natural shrinkage in the real potatoes, but the weight of the dirt has also shrunk. Here is where it cuts into the profits; here is where many men have figured so industriously to find why they lost money often when it looked as though they had a sure thing. It is hardly necessary to state that these losses aggregate hundreds of thousands of dollars every season.

It is quite clear to me that this kind of business cannot be kept up much longer. Some of my kind friends will no doubt accuse me of exaggerating the seriousness of this matter, and to such as may have any doubts as to the gravity of the problem I want to say if they could see some things I have seen and looked into they would feel as I do. It would be hard to overestimate the seriousness of this evil.

Why is it very little dirt is to be found in cars coming from certain shippers at any season, rain or shine, while others show too much dirt be the weather what it may,

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CABBAGE

If I had been preparing a volume on produce affairs twenty-five years ago I would most likely have felt disposed to offer an apology for daring to devote more than a few paragraphs to the subject of marketing cabbage.

In fact, it is probable that if a serious article had been prepared on the subject ten or fifteen years ago it would have been ridiculed by some of the very people who were peddling the vegetable when the wholesale price was based on so much a hundred heads instead of by the ton as is the case in selling winter cabbage nowadays.

But the development of the cabbage industry has been so phenomenal as to be astounding. Instead of finding a more or less doubtful and insignificant business in handling cabbage, as was the case a generation ago, we now have a highly organized specialty in this commodity whose volume easily involves several million dollars a year.

Our concern, however, is chiefly with methods employed in handling the business, and before the subject is dropped I hope to point out some things that are perhaps well known to the trade generally, but often overlooked or forgotten, as there are many things connected with the business that seem to be hardest to discern by the very people engaged in the buying, storing, shipping and selling of cabbage.

Of the different varieties of cabbage we shall have little to say, and for convenience it will answer our purposes to consider broadly two classes, viz: early and late.

In the first division we naturally include the crop produced in the south and southwest which comes on the market the first half of the year and is made up of Flat Dutch, Early York, Louisville Drumhead, Charleston, Wakefield, etc., and which is usually shipped in crates holding from 75 to 150 pounds. Of course, I refer to the slat crates which are loaded into a car that is usually shipped during the spring and

summer under refrigeration. About handling this early stock I shall have more to say later on which will apply partly, if not wholly, to the other kind of cabbage as well.

When we come to consider cabbage in the more northern states we have a different proposition from what we find in the early varieties. Strictly speaking there are two distinct varieties of cabbage in northern territory, exclusive of the red cabbage which falls into a class by itself.

Danish and Holland cabbage, i. e. stock grown from imported seed, are practically identical, and they are the nucleus of the whole industry. Both are white, mature late into hard heads if the plant has proper cultivation and is grown on the right soil under favorable weather conditions.

Domestic cabbage is closely akin to the Danish or Holland stock but usually comes on the market somewhat earlier, and does not have the keeping qualities of stock grown from genuine imported seed. The heaviest demand for domestic stock is for sour kraut and for supplying the early demand before the stock grown from imported seed is ready for shipment.

By all odds the cabbage grown from imported seed is the most important item in the business. Both York State and Wisconsin produce a tremendous amount of this stock which is shipped from October until well along into the following April and May. Continued shipping for six or eight months easily foots up to several thousand cars from each state. It should be stated that more or less winter stock is also grown in Michigan which is distributed over a wide territory. On the Pacific Coast a great section is supplied with cabbage grown in the Puget Sound region, where some very fine stock is produced. In addition to the states referred to more or less winter cabbage is grown in Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. But as a general proposition the stock grown in these last named states runs largely to the domestic instead of the pure Danish or Holland kind. In the Greeley, Colorado, section the Scotch Cross variety is grown quite extensively.

Despite the fact that our concern in this volume is primarily with marketing matters it is essential to digress for a brief spell from the strictly commercial features so as to get a line on the inside of the nature of the cabbage deal by having a little glimpse at the cabbage plant itself.

Even those who have taken only a passing interest in cabbage know that it is a plant which grows best in the higher latitudes. It would

not be stating an untruth to say cabbage is a cool weather plant, for when taken to a hot climate it "runs out" when the second or third crop is planted, and becomes what is called a "collard," well known in the south.

Domestic stock is the first step in the production of the collard. The gap between the real hard headed winter stock grown from imported seed, and the "blue stem collard" is like the descent from the garret to the cellar. By this no offense is meant to the intermediate variations, of course, as the foregoing comparison is only cited to convey some meaning as to the wide range in the several kinds of stock in this country.

From a marketing standpoint no one feature of the cabbage business is more important than proper selection of the right kind of seed so as to begin right. In southern territory only the domestic cabbage can be successfully grown. To attempt the use of imported Holland or Danish seed for early planting would bring certain disaster to the southern grower. But in the northern sections where winter cabbage is grown it is short sighted policy to resort to cheap domestic seed which is often represented by unscrupulous seedsmen as being as good as the imported seed.

For an early crop to be used for kraut purposes, or for putting on the market in summer, or early in the fall, domestic stock may be what is best for many growers, but when it comes to planting for a crop to store and keep for marketing late in the winter and early in the spring we can make no mistake in deciding that every argument is in favor of genuine imported seed.

The fact that there is a difference in the cost of the two kinds of seeds should not really enter into the question of which kind to use. Generally the imported seed can be had at \$3 to \$4 a pound while domestic seed can be bought for \$1.75 to \$2 a pound. Now, a pound of seed will ordinarily plant about 5 acres in cabbage, and when figured on the lowest average yield of 12 tons to the acre we see that the cost is about five or six cents per ton for the seed used. But it is more often that the yield of cabbage in the best northern sections is 20 to 25 tons per acre, and when the yield is more the cost of the seed becomes insignificant when compared with the difference in the keeping quality and selling price between domestic stock and cabbage grown from imported seed.

In some sections there has been so much complaint on account of a tendency to mix Holland and domestic stock which is all called the "real" Holland or Danish stock that some dealers have talked of fixing



a different scale of prices to cover the straight and mixed kind of stock. Perhaps this is about the only way that growers can be brought to a realization of the fact that it is false economy to save at the spigot and waste at the bung so far as seed is concerned. In a word, poor seed of the wrong kind will be dear at any price, and when a good winter cabbage is desired the right kind of seed may be cheap although it costs ten times the price asked for the wrong kind.

To get back to our original subject of marketing: Cabbage is a conundrum half the time. An old cabbage man who has been studying the deal for years told the author once that it is his opinion that cabbage will go "wrong" about an average of two years out of every five. He would not attempt to explain why this is the case. Maybe his average was figured too high, yet it does seem this vegetable is capable of performing some peculiar acts.

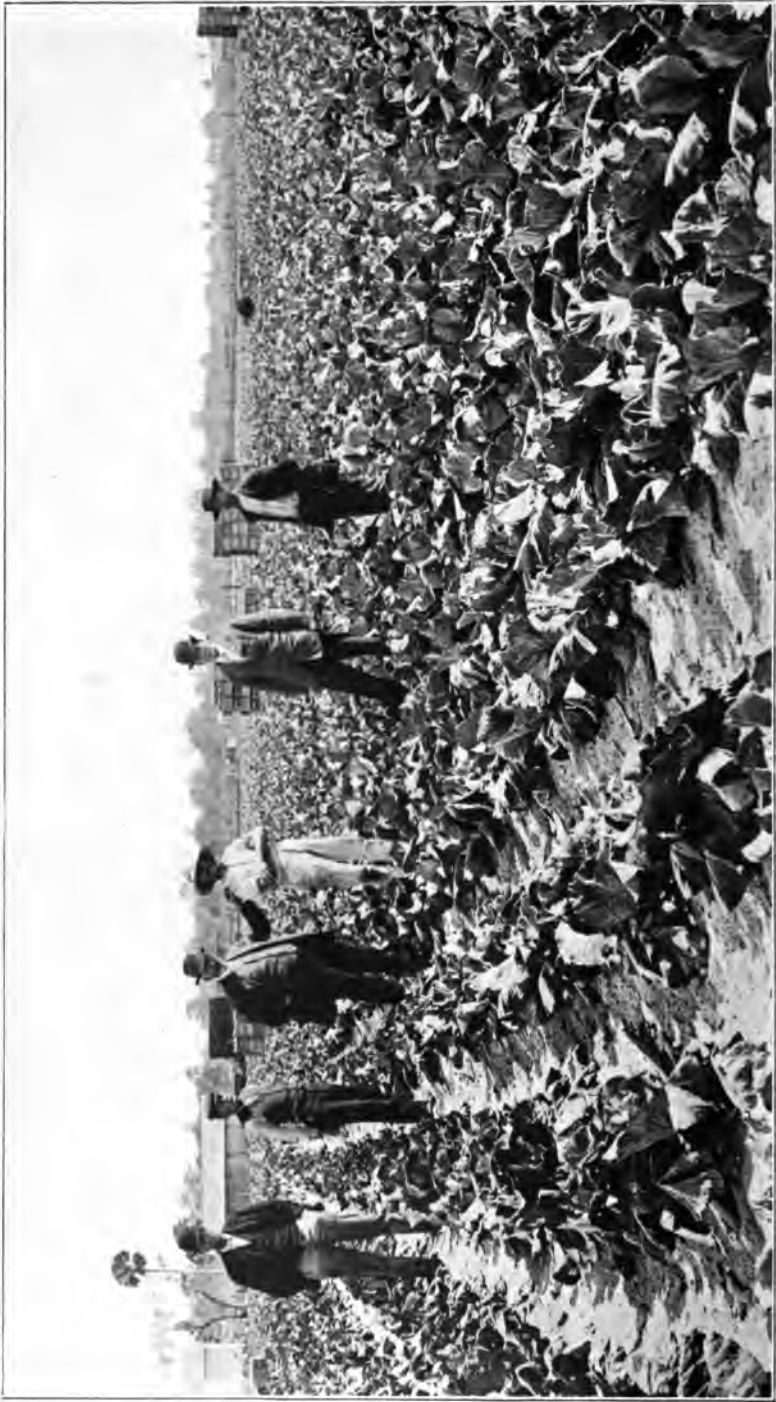
It is always a puzzle to find out exactly what the crop is and how much has been marketed up to a given time after being stored. In the west you will hear the dealers asking how much stuff is left in York state and at what prices they are loading, and in the east they are all eyes and ears to find what is doing in Michigan, Wisconsin and Colorado.

Cabbage is tricky and treacherous. You can never count the deal all in until the last car has been shipped. It so happens that the last few cars will often make a wise trader more money than the entire season's business. It is nearly always true that just as the deal is on its last legs the market gets a bulge that makes everybody stand aghast and wish for some of the stock that had recently been sold for fear it would have to be dumped out of warehouses. Of course, these late deals are risky and those who are well versed in the game do not favor taking long chances on many cars for the sake of making a few dollars. If weather conditions have been favorable for growing a new crop in the south most of the warehouses are unsafe in the north after April 1 or even March 1, sometimes.

The speculative element has helped to make the cabbage deal dangerous. What has been said in preceding chapters about the evils of speculation apply to the cabbage game with full force. But it would be unfair to the commodity we are discussing to say that it does not offer exceptional possibilities to those who can master its peculiarities. Some men study cabbage as a banker studies banking, and are careful to gauge the general produce outlook before they go strong into the game of speculating. These fellows who size up the ground most carefully are usually the traders who make money out of the deal.



FIELD OF DANISH CABBAGE IN NEW YORK STATE—HEADS ABOUT HALF MATURED;  
YIELD 20 TONS PER ACRE



A FLORIDA CABBAGE FIELD—READY FOR SHIPPING

When they see that conditions do not warrant high prices during the fall season when stocks are going into warehouses, they prefer to let the other fellows have the whole crop if they feel disposed to pay the necessary price.

Many a dealer with a warehouse or two in producing districts figures he must put away some cabbage to take care of his trade, but it is a question if he is not taking a short sighted view when he begins investing thousands of dollars in cabbage just to fill his warehouses, and by doing so all but empty his pocket book, and perhaps cripple his business to such an extent that it will take several good years to catch up where he left off. Operating warehouses and supplying one's trade is one thing, but doing business at a sure, though small profit, is quite another thing. Too many fingers have been burned in handling cabbage to require any further argument.

This brings us to the point of considering the warehouses as a factor in the winter cabbage deal. Generally these houses are owned and operated by private parties. Of course, there are times when they are a great advantage to their owners, and if stock could always be bought in the fall at a price that would insure a profit they would make the cabbage business a gold mine. But things are not always ideal in buying and selling cabbage. This much is true, the warehouses have had the general effect of making the cabbage business speculative. Growers see dealers make some long profits one season and next year they take the position that they must have more money for their stocks, and will not contract their fields for anything like a reasonable price. Often they force the market up and get caught with a lot of cabbage which has to sell for much less money than they could have gotten had they taken a reasonable price and sold early.

The author does not feel called upon to say whether warehouses are best for every car lot dealer. This is a question that every operator must decide for himself. But wherever a house or a chain of houses, is decided upon it should be the unvarying rule to have them constructed after the most approved plans for heating and ventilation. They should be built from carefully prepared plans and should be on a railroad spur or side track, or the cost of loading will be greatly increased when stock has to be taken out and transferred some distance, and maybe in zero weather at that. A suitable location is often half the battle in successfully handling a warehouse.

When to buy and when to sell are problems every cabbage dealer would give a lot of money to know how to solve, especially at certain critical stages of the game. Obviously the best time to buy is when

prices are right. But that gets us little nearer finding what is the right time to lay in a supply if one is to put away stocks.

So much depends upon so many things that I am sure no hard and fast rule can be laid down for buying. The visible supply, the general movement and the business conditions generally have to be borne in mind. No two seasons can be handled just alike, although the experience of one year will serve to help a sensible man to a proper conclusion as to what he shall do in some other season. Some old dealers declare \$5 per ton for Holland stock should be the outside price to pay.

When to sell is when you see a fair profit. That is elementary. Those who follow after Shylock and try to squeeze out the last penny from a head of cabbage, will get stuck sooner or later. Maybe they should be.

Handling cabbage for a dollar or two a ton is not bad business where dealers are buying, loading and shipping car lots from day to day. Sometimes a lucky streak will develop whereby \$3 or \$4 a ton profit comes to the wise trader who can size up the market several days or weeks ahead. It has been the lot of some dealers once in a great while to clean up long profits close to 100% on their investments, but this can hardly be expected twice in a lifetime unless some abnormal factor enters into the game. Like every other branch of the produce business the cabbage deal is hurt generally when everyone tries to overdo a good thing.

From the foregoing we might raise the question: Can a profit be assured to cabbage growers and dealers every year by co-operation in holding the deal on conservative lines? I would hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative, but at the same time it is quite clear that a little horse sense among the cabbage growers, shippers and dealers would help wonderfully in saving losses, if not in making profits.

If growers will not consent to a general understanding the dealers should get together and at least fix a limit beyond which they will not go. I fancy somebody will be screaming for an anti-trust law to stop this "restraint of trade," and such other talk as comes now and then from certain weak-kneed "sisters" who cannot bear to think of joining hands even for mutual protection. I make this suggestion because I do not think a trust in cabbage is either possible or desirable. What I do think is the height of folly, however, is for a lot of numskulls to get out at a loading station, and try to see who can give away the most money and get the least for it. If it were in the name of charity I should say not a word, but when it is done under the guise of business

it is comically foolish. Let us hope the money is more wisely invested by the saner people who get it.

Now, there is plenty of business in this old world for every decent business man, I believe. Your competitor may not look like an Apollo Belvidere in your estimation, but he is in the deal nevertheless. Better work with him as far as you can instead of working against him all the time. It will do you both good to exchange views now and then. You will be surprised how much business you find that somebody else is doing that you never heard or dreamt about before.

What applies to the dealers is also true of the growers. Yet it seems hardly worth while to take up time with the case of the growers, for they usually get the full benefit of the dealers' coin that is squandered so often trying apparently to put one another out of business.

But the growers ought always to be considered, and it is essential for them to get a fair return on their investment in producing a crop of cabbage or of anything else. Taken by and large it is improbable that a subscription fund will ever be necessary for any needy cabbage growers in the sections where winter cabbage is grown.

The following outburst relative to the peculiar virtues of the cabbage would be unworthy of our notice were it not the composition is that of a man of Racine county in Wisconsin, which is one of the greatest cabbage producing sections in this country. Just think of this assault upon an innocent head of cabbage that never did any harm except smell as nature intended!

#### AN ODE TO THE CABBAGE

Now, dear old Pegasus, deal kindly, I pray,  
With the green Neophyte who is mounting, today;  
Who imagines that he has a theme, that should charm  
That part of Creation that lives on the farm.

Many poets have sung of the lily, so fair,  
And the roses and posies, both common and rare.  
Of the ripe barley-fields, and the tall tasseled corn,  
And of their sweet breath, that on breezes are borne.

They have lauded the peony, the thyme, and the rue,  
The sunflower, the clover and the lark-spur so blue,  
They have gone into ecstasies over the oak  
And all the bright favorites that Springtime awoke.

But where among poets, either early or late,  
Have you run across one who has troubled his pate,  
To speak for the cabbage—e'en a faint word of praise—  
Altho' it is setting the world in a blaze.

So here's to the cabbage with its head, round and green,  
With its rubicund looks, and its smile so serene,  
With its crisp tender heart, and the perfume it yields,  
As it stands on its one sturdy leg in the fields.

Sure—thou are not of that ephemeral train,  
That wilts in the sun or a shower of rain,  
Or shows the white feather, with the first bite of frost,  
And drop thy leaves quickly as tho' all were lost.

'Tis true, you are a little too large, we must say,  
To make a real nobby, choice buttonhole bouquet,  
But while to thy size, the objection holds well,  
We defy thy detractors to side-track thy smell.

## CHAPTER XXX

### ONIONS

From a commercial standpoint onions present some really curious aspects. Probably no produce commodity fools more people more times if followed in a speculative way than the onion. Being a hard proposition to size up at any stage of the game so far as the actual supply goes, we are also puzzled half the time to arrive at a reasonably safe guess as to how many onions the nation will eat within a given period of time.

Then again, onions defy experts when it comes to telling how they will keep. Too often we have heard a sad story about some speculator who had a nice bunch of stuff in a good warehouse which was "as hard as a hickory nut" when put away that went to the bad before he knew it, and thus lost what gave promise of a nice profit. This does not always happen to be sure, but I submit it has occurred often enough to warrant my saying that onions are bad "black-legs" to gamble with. When there is a heavy shrinkage in a big stock of onions the resultant losses may be almost ruinous, even to a millionaire.

Still, by a careful selection of the best varieties of domestic stock, and with proper handling of the northern grown crop there is generally a fair profit in the onion deal.

Yellows, reds and whites are produced in northern territory and are used in the order named so far as quantity is concerned. It will hardly be necessary to say for the benefit of the trade generally where our commercial onion supply is grown, but for the information of those outside the tradè I might say that a half dozen states grow the winter onions used for pretty nearly the whole country.

New York, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin produce practically all the northern onions consumed in the United States. The Pacific Coast is supplied mostly by California, Oregon and Washington.



Bermuda onions in this country are produced mainly in Texas and California. These are either the white or the yellow crystal wax. Although capable of being kept in storage for some time, they are usually pushed into consumption and used up shortly after they are put on the market in the spring and early summer.

In addition to the onions grown in the United States we usually import quite a bit of genuine Bermuda stock from the Bermuda Islands, as well as some Denia onions from Spain, and some Egyptian stock. These are higher priced onions and are more restricted in their sale for this reason.

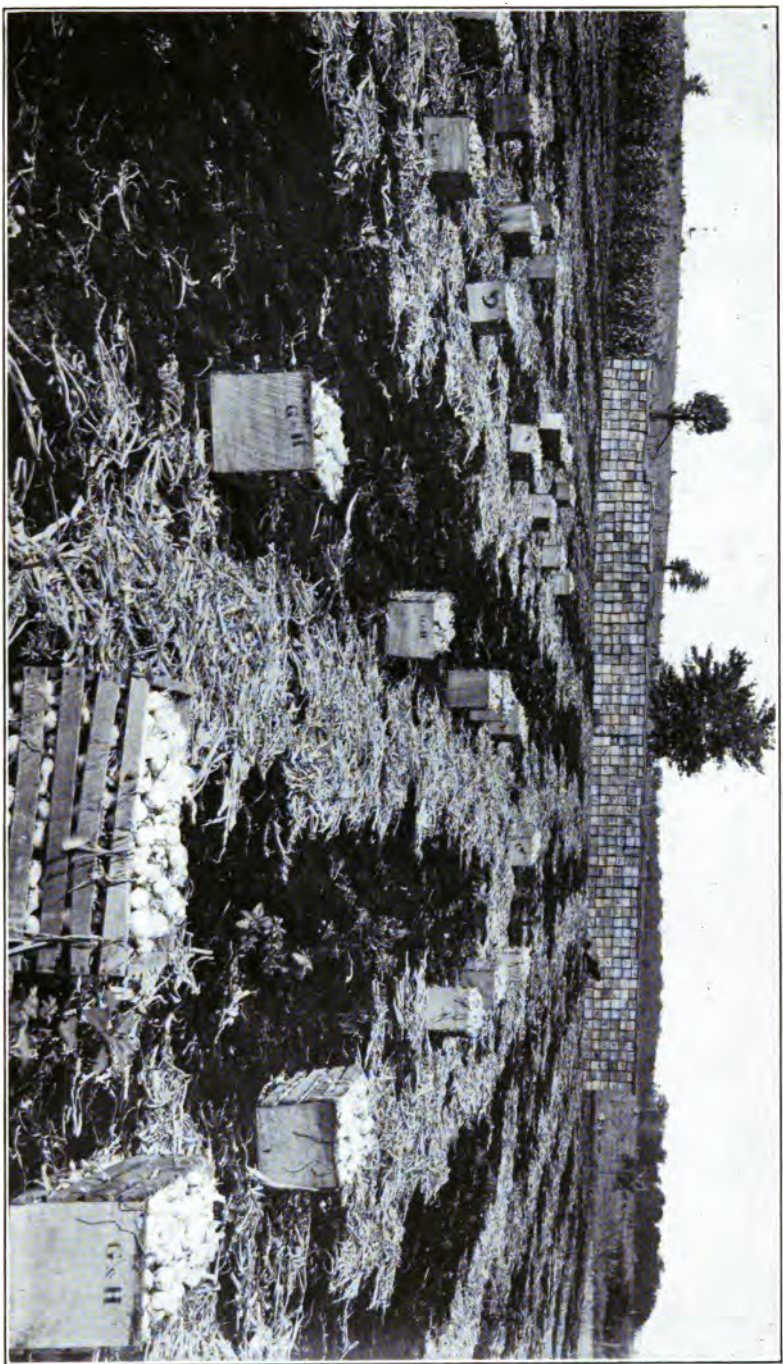
With respect to successful onion marketing we are confronted by a number of important considerations, both from the viewpoint of the commercial grower as well as the car lot shipper and jobber.

The first injunction I would give every person pretending to grow or ship onions is to study the market outlook every season, and the daily situation carefully when stock is ready to move or is actually moving. Every piece of information and every divergent view should be fully considered. The deal is too broad and too intricate for any one man to get a monopoly on ideas relating to making money on onions.

Those who have had experience in both producing and distributing know successful marketing is more difficult than producing them. I do not mean to underestimate the growing end; I cannot overestimate the selling end. To market onions and show a good profit it is first necessary to have good stock properly harvested and prepared for selling.

As a general rule Bermudas are put up in wooden crates made of slats and held together by a large wire spindle at the corners to fasten the slats one on another, and which makes an elegant package, for perfect ventilation is secured, and onions can easily stand ventilation as they sometimes heat quickly and are badly injured if not carefully handled. While these slat crates perhaps come a little high in price, experience seems to have shown conclusively that their use is a good investment, for it makes the stock show up to better advantage and command a higher price.

Northern stock is generally handled in bulk or in sacks containing a bushel or a bushel and a half. Some trade can use bulk better than sacks and vice versa. Naturally, therefore, it is a matter of giving your trade what is wanted. In this connection I will say, however, that I believe it would be a good idea to put up the best stock in crates and build up a trade for that style of package. What has been done in handling Bermuda onions furnishes a good basis for an opinion



CURING ONIONS IN THE FIELD—NAPPANEE, INDIANA SECTION  
*Courtesy Hort. Dept., Purdue Univ.*



HARVESTING ONIONS IN NEW YORK STATE—AFTER PULLING THEY ARE LEFT TO DRY  
AND ARE AFTERWARDS HAULED AWAY IN CRATES



as to what could be done with our best northern grown stock if the onions are selected and handled as they should be.

In the hope I may offer an idea or two that may help someone I desire to say a few things about the actual handling or the marketing end, and point out a few pitfalls and quicksands that I know have given trouble and made losses for not a few.

First, I wish I could impress upon everyone that it is essential for all onions to be thoroughly dried out before packing for shipment or before putting into storage. A cool, dry place is best to keep them, and a large shed is bully for spreading them out after hauling in from the fields where they have lain temporarily after being pulled, so some of the water in them will have a chance to evaporate. If onions are well cured, sound and dry, they can be kept longer and sold for much better prices than if handled improperly and are put away in careless shape. In no line of produce do we see a better example of what can be done in the way of securing an extra profit by using a bit of horse sense and "elbow grease" than in taking care of onions and putting them up properly.

Another thought that presents itself to me is the matter of frozen onions, which often have to be dealt with in the winter. Some old men in the produce business, I have found, do not seem to know that if onions are properly handled the frost can be taken out, and that the stock is practically as good as ever. But frosted stock must have immediate attention. If spread out in a cool room and left for a day or two they will usually come around all right. Even when frosted as hard as a rock they can be thawed out gradually and nearly always sold for the full market price. Of course, freezing does not do an onion any good and is to be avoided when possible, and I only refer to the matter of handling frosted stock because I have known of several comical cases where some of our good jobbers in different markets have thrown up their hands in holy horror when they found some onions that had been frozen mixed in a car of good stock.

While we are considering marketing phases I would be glad if I could answer the question I have been asked so often "What is the best plan for the commercial grower to follow in marketing so as to insure the most money?" So far as the Texas and California Bermudas are concerned it seems that the pooling into an association is the best plan, although some growers prefer to do their own selling, and seem to get very satisfactory results that way.

In the case of northern onions, the seal of experience is clearly in favor of the individual grower making his own plans, selling to local

buyers or shipping in car lots to commission houses. If he prefers to sell f. o. b. he generally finds someone at his railroad station who will buy even if he cannot sell them in the field as is often the case, and sometimes before harvesting. Now and then a large grower who can load straight cars prefers to load and ship to some market, having made a sale before shipping or turning over to someone to have the car sold for his account.

Perhaps the pool will never make much headway in the northern onion deal. Growers have plenty of time and are not pressed to dispose of their holdings as is the case of the grower of Bermuda onions in the south who must generally make hay when the sun shines and sell his onions while he may. It is a matter simply that must be regulated by conditions. Those who have succeeded by following after some one plan should continue in the same way until there is a good reason to change. But it is a question that must be thought out carefully.

Owing to the tremendous proportions the onion set business has assumed I would like to go into a discussion of some of its phases but cannot do more than refer briefly to some points that have suggested themselves to me from time to time.

Practically the entire supply of onion sets used in this country are grown in Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio. Some other localities, of course, grow some sets, but not in such quantities as the states just mentioned. It will no doubt seem peculiar to some people who read this to find that there are hundreds and hundreds of people engaged in the growing of sets alone. When we come to consider the fact that they are handled in car loads, and shipped into every part of the country we can easily see that the onion set industry is no small one within itself. As a matter of fact, there are a number of large firms whose chief business the year around is handling sets. They contract them in the fields, and even before the crop is planted they make sales for future delivery to their customers, contingent upon the production of the crop, of course.

And there are some peculiar things about these sets which I am tempted to go into and would were it not that we are dealing mostly with marketing matters. But since the writer has found so many people who had no notion of the difference between a set and an onion it may not be out of place to say that a set is merely a little onion, a form of seed, which will produce a stalk rather than a bulb when planted. The set must not be over a half inch in diameter, and from that size down is used to grow the garden variety to be used green for the table. When sets are run over a screen the larger sizes are taken out to be used for pickling usually.

Commercial onions are grown generally from genuine onion seed, the domestic kind coming mostly from California, and the Berdumas from the Bermuda Islands. But it is another peculiar thing that if the seeds are planted very thick they grow up into a slender stalk and bear more seeds in a cluster on top, whereas if given 4 or 5 inches between each hill there will be but little top and the bulb forms at the root which results in the round onion.

Before ending this chapter I want to say a word about disinfectants. We have become so accustomed to reading the jokes we find in the papers about the smell of onions that I only wish somebody would develop an odorless onion. But then it would not be an onion. Since we apparently cannot separate an onion from its smell I can only hope some remedy can be found to counteract the unpleasant odor that people have to endure when coming into contact with a person who is fond of this odiferous globule, and has indulged his appetite fully. It is simply horrible unless we go and do likewise. Personally the author is fond of all kinds of onions, and only regrets that because of the smell he eats only a small part of what he would like.

He will be a real benefactor to the whole human race, and especially so to onion growers and dealers who will by cross breeding or otherwise develop a new strain of onion or garlic that will give us the effect without the smell. It would result in making millions of people eat onions often and freely who now taste sparingly and infrequently for fear of being ostracised by all civilized people who are cursed with a delicate olfactory nerve.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### MELONS

In treating this subject it will hardly be worth while to more than make a cursory survey of the melon field so far as our purposes are concerned, and advance a few suggestions with reference to the commercial aspect of melons.

Naturally the subject falls under two subdivisions,—watermelons and cantaloupes, as these are mainly the kinds that interest the trade and a majority of the readers of this work. While data of a historic nature would make this chapter too long if indulged in as much as the author would like, and as many readers would perhaps appreciate, still some slight notice should be taken in passing of the two kinds of melons we have under consideration.

The watermelon is a hot weather plant that is said to have originated in Asia Minor, and has been cultivated for centuries in various countries. It is true the melon they grow is not produced in just the same way as ours, but they are said to be the same in most essential features. One variety is grown underground, that is, the melons form on the vine like a potato. Travelers say these melons are delicious and their juice is highly prized as a drink. No doubt the story will seem strange to many people in the trade who have been accustomed to the melons grown in the United States, and will think it strange that a similar melon, perhaps not quite so large, can actually be grown under the soil as people in parts of Asia Minor are said to produce them. It is further stated that pigeon manure is used almost exclusively where it can be obtained to grow the finest kinds of old world melons. This is merely referred to as a hint to those interested in turning out a better melon in this country, and where experience shows fertilizer of this kind to be excellent for the purpose.

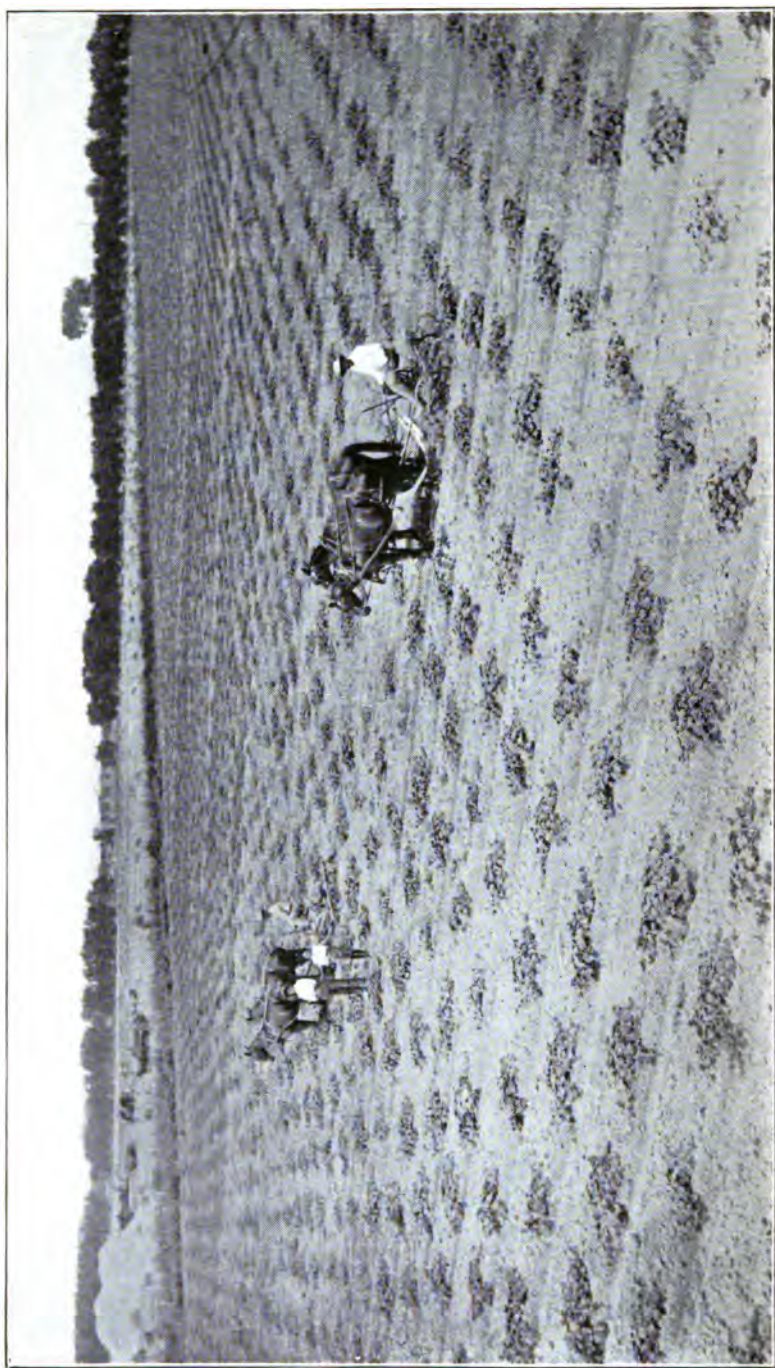
Of the leading varieties of watermelons in this country we have the following which are known as the best commercial kinds: Kolb Gems, Tom Watsons, Triumphs, Sweethearts, Monte Christos, Alabama



RATTLESNAKE WATERMELONS "SMILIN'" ON DE VINE"—INDIANA

*Courtesy Hort. Dept., Purdue Univ.*





CANTALOUPE RANCH, MESA, ARIZONA—54 DAYS AFTER PLANTING

Sweets, Bradfords, Rattlesnakes and Icebergs. It is hard to say which is the "best" melon for it depends on the market and the season to a large extent. Taken as an all around melon perhaps the Kolb Gem would be voted a favorite by a majority of those who grow, ship and handle melons, though its eating qualities cannot be compared to some others. Owing to the fact that this melon has a thick rind it can stand more jolting and jostling than some of the other more fragile kinds that seem literally to go to pieces where a Kolb will stand up and sell at a fair price. For any melon to be worth while from a commercial point of view it must bear shipping well.

But where they can be marketed without being injured in transit it seems to the writer that there are other varieties that have many points in their favor, such as the Tom Watson, Triumph, Sweetheart, Monte Christo, Alabama Sweet and Rattlesnake.

And while we are on the subject of transportation it may not be out of place to say that there is no commodity in the produce field that is more deserving of attention so far as lower and more equitable freight rates are concerned than watermelons. It is quite true they are highly perishable and when a car is delayed or damaged before reaching a market, and is thrown upon the hands of the railroads to sell for freight charges it is almost a certainty that it is a dead loss, for there is nothing quite so worthless to a produce man than a car of bum watermelons, especially when the market is overstocked, and that is usually when most of the bad cars seem to turn up to be turned down.

Now, if a dealer in the trade who knows all the crooks and turns in selling melons cannot do anything with them, so much the more are the railroads powerless to recoup themselves and get anything for melons that the consignor don't want and the consignee won't have. But it frequently happens that the excessive freight charges are the main cause for demoralized markets as the price for melons is so high that they meet a slow sale and keep piling up with the result of heavy losses often for those who have bought them, as melons must be sold when they come on the market and cannot be held indefinitely awaiting a more favorable turn in market conditions.

Why it is that lower rates cannot be secured on watermelons is hard to see, because the railroads would get to haul a great many more cars as they would be cheaper to the consumer and many more slices and halves as well as whole melons would be used if the average price were shaded a bit. Based on the value of the tonnage the writer does not hesitate to say it is impossible, with maybe one or two exceptions, to find a commodity whose market value is so small and where such a heavy

tariff is demanded by the railroads as applies to watermelons. The bulk of the melon is rind and is worth nothing, yet it has to pay as high or even a higher rate than many other produce commodities which are valuable even to the box or package in which they are shipped.

But to the writer's mind it has seemed that if the railroad people would stop and think how the traffic in watermelons would be almost doubled if the freight rates were more reasonable, and that they would get a substantial increase in their total revenues by reason of a lower rate on melons, they would be disposed to make some concessions that would work a triple blessing to the grower, shipper and dealer who could enjoy a more steady market during the melon season and would also fit in nicely to fill the dull summer gap in the tonnage of some of the more important lines that haul most of the melons.

Looked at from any standpoint there is a lot of food for thought in this question of lower rates on watermelons and it seems if the trade interested should make a concerted effort to get a more reasonable rate, at least from leading producing districts to the larger markets where most of the melons are consumed, and where a great many more could be taken if they could be run out to the public at a slightly lower average price. This would greatly simplify the problem of uncertain markets every season.

As in the past watermelons will continue to be produced all over the Southern states in sufficient quantity to supply the country during the summer, and as the season advances sections farther north as high as latitudes 35 to 40 degrees come in with liberal crops for the late summer and early fall trade as long as there is a demand for melons in the central states. On the Pacific coast watermelons are grown in abundance as far north as Washington and Oregon and these are used largely to supply the northwestern and coast trade.

Shippers generally could greatly improve the melon trade by devoting more care to loading and trying to get a better average weight in the melons they ship. Too often cars are loaded carelessly and billed out to some dealer or buyer and the information given, if any, is too meagre for making a sale as promptly as would be the case if the size and number of the melons had been definitely known in time. And when a car is loaded with 25 or 30 pound average the melons should weigh whatever average is represented.

For the convenience of the trade the following table will enable shippers and dealers to get at the average from the count, and generally speaking, it will be found to apply to shipments from all sections and in all seasons:



THE THREE STANDARD PACKAGES USED FOR SHIPPING INDIANA CANTALOUPE

*Courtesy Hort. Dept., Purdue Univ.*





SELECTING COLORADO CANTALOUPE SEED

Melons running from 1,300 to 1,400 count will average 20 pounds, from 1,100 to 1,200 count 24 pounds, 1,100 count 25 pounds, 1,000 count 30 pounds, 900 count 35 pounds and 800 count 40 pounds. By keeping this in mind dealers can tell readily about what melons they will get in a car of a certain average.

On the subject of cantaloupes there are many observations that might be set down, but the author believes only a few general remarks will be worth while.

Until a few years ago, as time goes, the cantaloupe was produced only on a limited scale by farmers and gardeners for home or local use, but lately we have seen the acreage increase a thousand fold in several parts of the country. In California, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida, as well as in several sections in the Eastern states, we find many farms and ranches devoted to the cultivation of this melon, and upon the whole the industry has been a highly profitable one. although not every season has made money for the growers.

Bad weather, bad markets and bad methods have often caused growers to swear off only to see them "try their luck" again the next season, for those who get a taste of the easy money or hear of the success of others producing melons are usually sure to keep it up until they make a killing or go broke. It is altogether a hazardous speculation, this cantaloupe business. Frequently dealers and commission men who have made some long advances and longer promises on the strength of past performances and the hope of future successes, find themselves in trouble when the time comes to market the melons contracted, and quite naturally they frequently throw up their hands as well as their contracts when they see a loss staring them in the face.

It all depends on what the season brings forth if the dealer can get his money back for the usual advances to the growers, as well as transportation charges and his general operating expenses in connection with handling the melons. Of course, if the dealers can not make anything, the growers can not. But unfortunately the reverse of this does not always hold true, for cantaloupe growers have been panhandled along with other growers from time to time. However, it must be said most of those who have attained fame in the Western melon realm and have stuck to the game have had to deal fairly for two reasons: They have generally made money and could afford to be honest, and because competition would not permit anything too rank in the way of figuring pools of late years. There are some exceptions to this statement, but it generally holds good. The fact that growers in the main have made money bears out the correctness of my statement.

Cantaloupe growers are unwise to contract with any but a firm of known financial ability and with some experience in selling and distributing melons. If they do their full duty for a 10% commission it makes little difference if they plank down an advance of 50 cents or 75 cents at loading station or not. But the system of making some advance to the growers in the far west where cantaloupes are grown under irrigation seems to have become pretty well fixed and will likely be continued in the future.

Where rain is liable to occur during the latter stage of a cantaloupe's growth the industry is always a doubtful proposition, for a hard rain can do untold damage if it comes at the wrong time. Undoubtedly more money has been lost to growers and dealers trying to call the turn on the weather, as applying to cantaloupes as well as other things, than from any other one cause. Those who have had experience either in growing or marketing know this to be absolutely true.

The system of grading and packing long ago adopted in the Rocky Ford, Colorado section needs little comment and no criticism if properly enforced, as time has proved it to be the best. Separating the melons into "standards," or 45 to the crate, or "ponies," with 54 to the crate, is about as good an arrangement as could be wished.

One thing, however, needs to be said about packing, and that is more care should be taken to see that melons are not too green, or too ripe for picking. Only a person of experience can tell when a melon is near enough or too ripe to be gathered and shipped, and it goes without saying that only those of some experience or instruction from some one who knows should try to perform or superintend the harvesting and packing of these melons. Only careful study and many experiments with previous shipments will enable a man to know with reasonable certainty what the condition of a given crate or car of these melons will be when they reach their destination, if picked in California or elsewhere when two-thirds ripe or just ripe, and loaded into a refrigerator car for the eastern markets.

The fact that melons do not always "carry" the same and that transportation is frequently uncertain and tardy also contribute to the difficulty that those interested in the business have to contend with. It is, therefore, a matter of paying close attention to every development and keeping in daily touch with the markets, the weather, the railroads or express people, and lastly, the melons themselves in order to have even a fair chance of not making a mess of what might otherwise be a good deal. Year after year we hear of some dealer in some market, or the growers of a certain locality, who have "got in bad" on their melon deal because of carelessness in one way or another.

"If it were not for thus and so we would have a great season" is the usual complaint. Fully nine times out of ten this "thus and so" could have been avoided in part if not entirely by thorough study and careful planning in time to avoid the trouble. Of course, the weather has to be taken as it comes, and that one big difficulty, we must admit, can upset all the perfection of marketing plans one can devise. But aside from the weather we usually see better business and with more profit and satisfaction where people stick to the job from the beginning to the end, and this means for the grower or shipper to not leave too much for the man who has the selling of the melons to look after. He has his hands full to attend to the selling end if he does it well, and it can not be expected of him to take care of what someone else should attend to.

It is hardly worth while to say more than a word about the shipping end of the business, but it will not be out of place to caution those who have to attend to loading and shipping to see that all cars in which melons are to be put should be iced and cooled properly before the melons are loaded. Of course, all the heat or some of it should be allowed to cool out of the melons themselves while under the sheds, or in precoolers when available, before the crates are put into the cars. It is unfortunate that more precooling has not been done. Again, every car should be re-iced in transit as often as needed to insure contents reaching destination in good shape. Many cars of melons are damaged every year by failure to observe carefully these details.

In conclusion, it occurs to the author that the subject of melon seeds deserves a few suggestions for the general welfare and progress of both watermelon and cantaloupe growing.

No melon seeds of any kind are dependable unless you save them yourself or get them from some one who knows what he is selling you. It seems that growers will never realize the importance of being careful in the selection of the proper strains of melon seeds they buy from year to year.

Those interested should see to it that the junk of every Tom, Dick and Harry be let alone, no matter how cheap they are offered, and use good horse sense and pay a little more if necessary to procure the kind you can be sure will not "come up" wrong.

It hardly seems worth while to add that after a nice lot of melons are ready to market it is a good idea for growers and dealers to make sure of saving enough seed from good specimens to supply their next season's needs.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### CITRUS FRUITS

The citrus fruits family, of which the orange is the most important commercial variety, had its origin in Indo-China where it is indigenous, and today India in her Citra orange is credited with producing some of the finest citrus fruit to be found in the world. Risso and Poitcan, two of the greatest authorities on citrus fruits, have described some eighty varieties of oranges, differing chiefly in external shape, size and flavor. Practically all of them may be traced either to the sweet or China, and the bitter or Bragrade orange.

The evolution of the orange from its wild state to the different well defined varieties with which we are familiar today possesses some unique horticultural features, and the history of the diffusion of the orange is interwoven with the romantic expeditions which have resulted in the spread of civilization since the time when the first bands of Ayrian marauders turned their faces westward and spread over Europe, down to the time of the Spanish explorations which resulted in the discovery and settling of the new world.

No definite date can be fixed when the orange was introduced into southern Europe, although it is believed that the sweet orange was probably brought into Portugal about 1547, and was soon thereafter carried into the Azores, where the St. Michael orange was developed. Some writers claim that before this time, probably in the eleventh century, the orange plant was introduced into Italy, Sicily and Spain by Mediterranean traders who brought the plant from Arabia and Syria. After all, it is pure conjecture as to what date oranges were first grown in Europe, and it is of little importance for our purposes when it was introduced, although it is well enough to bear in mind the fact that the orange came to us over this route.

Of far more importance to the fruit men today is the fact that oranges were brought to America in the sixteenth century by Spanish explorers

who made sporadic attempts to produce this fruit in Florida and Mexico where there are scattering groves of trees today bearing mute testimony to the fact that the spirit of adventure and the greed for gold are, perhaps, a mixed blessing to mankind after all.

Despite the fact that most authorities agree that the Spaniards are responsible for the orange in America, some writers contend that a species of wild orange is indigenous within a limited area bounded by the Gulf of Mexico. Certain it is that wild oranges are found scattered all along in our southern states, but the writer knows of no reason which would offset the claim that these trees are an outgrowth of the early plantings above referred to.

So far investigations by different writers seem to show that Bernal Dias del Castillo planted the first orange trees in Mexico when he accompanied Cortez on his tour of pillage and plunder in the land of the Aztecs. But little effort was made at cultivating oranges in Mexico, and the first results at cultivation in this country worthy of mention are recorded in the early history of Florida and Louisiana, and shortly thereafter among the groves in southern California.

There were numerous plantings of the wild or bitter orange in the beginning and considerable quantities of this fruit were grown by the Spanish colonists shortly after their settlements were first made. Practically the entire state of Florida was well adapted to orange growing, and wherever a settlement or trading post was established trees were planted; eventually orchards were cultivated in a systematic way and the business has assumed enormous proportions reaching an average output of about 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 boxes in recent years.

With respect to the introduction of oranges into California little is known except that the Franciscan monks perhaps started the first groves in 1796 when they founded a number of missions in the section of country that is now largely included in the state of California. They were interested primarily in the conversion of savage Indian tribes to christianity, yet they were not unmindful of their material interests and quite naturally they were quick to foresee the commercial value of the orange.

Of the twenty-one missions established practically every one had its gardens and orchards which usually consisted of only a few acres. It seems that but little effort was made to improve the quality of the fruit until the extensive orchards were begun about the San Gabriel mission in Los Angeles county. These orchards were supposed to have been set in 1804 by one Father Thomas Sanchez. The records of this mission for that period do not show the extent of the orchards, but ac-

according to later inventories about 1834 when the secularization of the missions was undertaken San Gabriel reported 233 fruit trees upon which no valuation was placed.

About this time there was a record made of an orchard being planted for home use by Los Vignes at Los Angeles. Other orchards were planted shortly thereafter by Manual Requena, and in 1841 Wm. Wolf-skill had what was then considered an enormous orchard of two acres which is supposed to have been the first commercial orange orchard in the state of California. By 1858 quite a number of other groves had been started. In 1857 L. VanLuven is credited with beginning some orchards from seedlings at old San Bernardino, and also planting about forty-five trees in the same year which were obtained from Los Angeles. At Crafton a few hundred trees were set in 1865. Riverside, 57 miles east of Los Angeles, grew the first extensive orchards from seeds which were planted in 1870 and were reset in 1872-73. There is a tradition about two old orange trees growing at this time in the El Cajon Valley, but there is no authentic data to back up the claim.

The beginning in the northern sections is traced to some seed planted about Sacramento in 1855 and transplanted in 1859 in Butte county where some of the trees are still growing. From this time on the spread is reported to have been general, and by 1862 the state records show there were about 25,000 citrus trees in California located mainly in the vicinity of Los Angeles. In 1873 when the Southern Pacific Railroad was opened for traffic there was quite a boost given to the industry because of increased shipping facilities, and later the opening of the Santa Fe and other railroad lines resulted in a wonderful spread of the industry until today something like 30,000 cars represent the enormous annual output from California.

In this country the Washington navel is of far greater commercial importance than any other variety, being grown extensively both in California and Florida. This orange was brought to the United States by William Saunders of the United States Department of Agriculture, who procured ten trees in Bahia, Brazil in 1870 and which were distributed in various parts of the United States. Mrs. L. C. Tibbets, then of Riverside, California, was fortunate enough to get two of them, and the buds from these trees were grafted on to other orange trees. These oranges came to be known as the Riverside navel in contradistinction to a similar variety which previously had been brought from Australia, but which had been found to lack some of the desirable qualities of the more recent importation. The spread of the Washington navel was rapid, and it has now won first place among most growers and fruit dealers.



PICKING ORANGES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA—JAPANESE LABOR



A YOUNG CALIFORNIA ORANGE GROVE

In the order of their importance from a fruit standpoint oranges rank about as follows: the Washington Navel which is a good keeper as well as a very palatable fruit, the Australian Navel, the Mediterranean Sweet, Maltese Blood, St. Michael, Valencia Late, and the Mandarin and Tangerine which were brought from China. All of these oranges have their places in the fruit schedule, notwithstanding some of them may seem of small import until we come to look into the subject closely.

Of the early history of the lemon there is little to be said except that the fruit was first brought into Spain by the Arabs the latter part of the thirteenth century, and was shortly afterwards grown in the Azores from which the first shipments to England were made about 1494. This fruit is not so widely grown as the orange and the commercial supply of the whole world is obtained almost wholly from Spain, Portugal, Sicily, California and Florida.

This fruit is more difficult to produce and transport than oranges, and the fact that lemon trees are more susceptible to the effect of cold weather makes their cultivation except in certain favored localities a hazardous undertaking. The Lisbon variety which is grown in this country principally in the Riverside, California district was brought from Portugal, while the Genoa lemon which is grown in the Los Angeles vicinity came from the groves about Genoa, Italy, and is said to have been introduced into this country by Don Jose Rubio of Los Angeles. The Bonnie Brae and the Villa Franca are two varieties which are said to have originated with H. M. Higgins of San Diego county, California, while the Eureka lemon was first grown by C. R. Workman of Los Angeles. The Messia is another variety but it is not extensively cultivated.

Lemon culture in the United States has been retarded considerably because of the unfavorable tariff schedules which heretofore have favored the imported fruits; but with the increased tariff rate on foreign lemons it is believed that most of the domestic markets will hereafter be supplied by American grown lemons and those who have looked the situation over realize the fact that parts of California, Texas and Florida hold out some favorable prospects so far as producing territory is concerned. The success of the domestic lemon now seems to depend more on reasonable transportation charges than anything else.

The pomelo, which is more commonly known as grape-fruit, is grown most successfully in Florida where it reaches perfection so far as flavor is concerned. This fruit originated in the Malay peninsula and was first brought to the West Indies by Captain Shaddock during the last cen-

ture. It was shortly afterwards taken up by the Florida growers and later by Californians where it has been cultivated extensively, but without very satisfactory results owing to the lack of juice and the seeming impossibility of getting the proper flavor as in Florida.

The citron is cultivated to some extent in Florida and California, the largest orchard probably in this country being the Westlake at Duarte in Los Angeles County.

Of limes there are some five or six varieties which are cultivated principally in Mexico and the West Indies. The island of Montserrat in the West Indies, which has an area of only thirty-two square miles, is credited with the largest grove in the world. Of late years our largest importations of limes have been from Mexico and San Domingo.

From a commercial standpoint the evolution of citrus fruit growing in this country has been phenomenal. A good deal has been said on the subject of this important business and time and again public attention has been directed to the fact that it is one of the greatest sources of revenue to the leading commercial growing sections. Long ago the value of the California orange crop became greater than the annual gold output. Those in position to know the facts will not deny that the Florida crop is one of the greatest sources of revenue to the people of that state. There seems to be no getting enough of oranges, and this probably will always be true if they are of good quality and can be had at favorable prices.

Attention has been called to the importance of raising the standards of quality of other fruits while discussing them in foregoing chapters, and it may be stated here that the same rule applies to citrus fruits. It easily can be seen that in such an enormous industry any change in the system of growing, packing and marketing which will cut down the percentage of decay, or in other words the loss, means a great sum of money in the end to those who are directly concerned.

If there had been any room for doubt as to the effect proper handling of oranges had on the quality when they reached their destinations in various markets, those doubts certainly were dissipated by the investigations conducted by representatives of the U. S. Department of Agriculture a few years ago which were under the direction of Mr. Powell, a skilled pomologist.

The Bureau of Plant Industry issued a pamphlet which contained the result of these investigations, and the percentage of decay shown in fruit which had been harvested carefully and properly brushed and then precooled before shipping, as all oranges should be, showing practically no decay in the long run from California to New York. With pre-

cooling now considered a necessary step in the marketing of oranges it would seem that the system has become very nearly perfect so far as the methods employed are concerned, but as was pointed out by the experts in charge of these investigations, nothing can take the place of careful handling in getting the fruit ready for shipment, as the percentage of decay in every instance was enormously high where the oranges had been mechanically injured in preparing them for shipment.

Generally speaking, groves which have proper attention produce the best average fruit, and oranges which are handled least develop the least decay from the time they leave the grove until they reach the consumer. Any specks on an orange pave the way to its ruin, as these minute particles are veritable hot beds for bacteria. Those accustomed to handling fruit know what it means for one or two rotten oranges to be in a package and to have several of these bad packages scattered through a car.

The author feels that Mr. Powell has covered the case thoroughly in the following language which he takes the liberty to quote from the bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture bearing on the subject:

"There are a few fundamental factors that appear to govern the successful shipment of the orange. The groves should be kept free from scale and in good condition, in order to avoid the necessity of washing the fruit; the picking, the hauling and the packing-house operations should be of such a character as to preserve the natural immunity of the orange rather than to make it susceptible to rot by rough mechanical handling. It is equally important to ship the fruit quickly after picking and packing at the lowest practical temperature. There has been an improvement in the methods of handling the orange in the last few years, but the amount of injury that occurs in handling the fruit in many groves and packing houses is still excessive. Citrus fruits are probably handled better than any other large fruit crop in the United States. No other fruit crop is handled with such a degree of skill and economy, but at the same time it should be recognized that it is false economy to reduce the cost of the various handling operations to a point that makes a proper handling of the fruit impossible. To overcome the losses from decay in transit is a business matter related to the methods of organizing the citrus-fruit business, to the systems of labor hiring, the methods of picking and hauling the fruit, the system of packing-house management, and the methods and efficiency of transportation. A system of organization, of labor handling or of packing-house management that makes the quantity rather than the quality and uniformity of the work the leading consideration is detrimental to the shipping quality of the fruit."



The author has had some suggestions in mind which he intended to include in this chapter relative to marketing citrus fruits, and discuss in detail some possible changes in the methods of handling oranges heretofore in vogue. But inasmuch as most of the men connected with the business are experts in that particular field, and since the marketing system, by auction or otherwise, has been carried almost to perfection it would seem that it is rather dangerous ground to tread upon with the expectation of accomplishing anything worthy of the name. Yet some remarks on certain ragged edges may not be out of place.

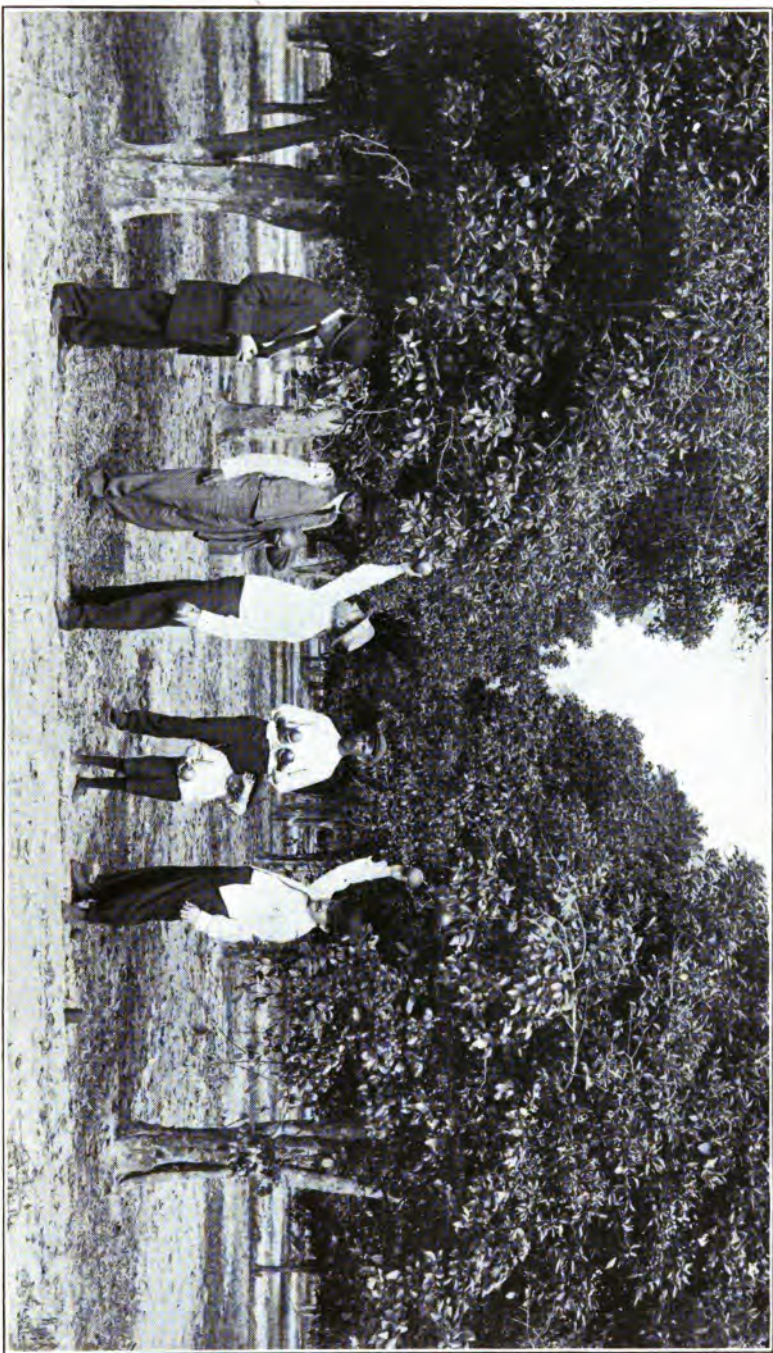
To the writer's mind it seems that there are entirely too many brands of oranges, especially those usually handled through a large association or marketing agency. Oranges are simply oranges,—either good, bad or indifferent. Those who are handling these various brands all the time probably have no difficulty in keeping up with them, but even the average fruit dealer scratches his head when you mention some of them.

For several years the writer has inclined to the opinion that ultimately a scheme can be worked out to pack citrus fruits so that the unit will not go by the dozen to the consumer or so much apiece, but by arranging a certain size package to sell for, say 25c. The writer is aware of the fact that several experiments of this kind have been tried without very satisfactory results. Still he believes that the scheme can be executed and with the aid of proper advertising will reach the consumer to better advantage than through methods now in vogue.

The main point in arranging a smaller unit than the common packing box is that the smaller package is more convenient for the average buyer, and for the additional reason that it is a strong talking point on which to base an argument for the consumer to use a certain kind of fruit. Imagine a nicely illustrated ad reading something like this: *"Our delicious oranges in dainty baskets packed with the utmost care and sold under a positive guarantee to please you. You cannot duplicate the food value in any other kind of fruit. Price 25c."*

So far only the ice has been broken in advertising to reach the consumer, but what has been done here and there affords an excellent object lesson. The writer does not fear to predict that within the next few years there will be some scheme developed and carried into execution which will astound the progressive old timer who inclines to believe that no further improvements can be made in successfully marketing citrus fruits.

During the preparation of this volume the writer has been approached on several occasions and urged to include in this chapter certain technical matter relating both to the growing and the packing of citrus fruits,



ORANGE GROVE AT KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA, WHERE SOME OF THE BEST FRUIT  
IN THE STATE IS GROWN



CALIFORNIA LEMONS

but he regrets that he has not seen his way clear to incorporate such material as would make of this a technical treatise, whereas his intention at the outset was to give only a casual resume of the fruit business from a more or less general marketing standpoint and not to include more than is essential in the way of scientific or technical matter to help illustrate marketing problems.

It was thought by one eastern dealer that a careful comparison of Florida and California would be a matter of great interest, but the author regrets his lack of time and space to go into a discussion of this kind. Besides it is not at all necessary. The two states occupy an entirely different field and have their particular advantages and disadvantages. Rather than parade their shortcomings the author would prefer to assist in working out a remedy for them; their advantages are sufficiently well known and have already been briefly referred to in the foregoing.

To a casual observer it would seem that the citrus fruit business literally breeds millionaires. After all, maybe there is some connection between the color of the fruit and the color of the metal for which they appear to have been able to make a ready exchange, but it could hardly be said of the men who have grown wealthy in the citrus fruit business that they are possessed of the so-called "tainted money," because they have certainly given value received for the fortunes they have accumulated and it is doubtful if a class of more patriotic broad gauged people could be found in any other line of business than those you will meet engaged in the growing, shipping and selling of citrus fruits. Most of them are an honor to the line of business they represent, which in itself is certainly a credit to this country.

Of course, I speak from the standpoint of the whole and not of the individual. We all know the business would stand a show of being a paradise if certain men and their methods could be eliminated from the game.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### PEACHES

So much has been said about the culture of the peach and the adaptability of certain varieties to different localities that it would be useless to try to add anything of special interest to that phase of the subject.

Nor does it seem worth while to add any comments on the best varieties to select for commercial purposes, although we may consider a few of the merits and demerits of certain varieties before closing this chapter.

Undoubtedly there are several good kinds of peaches which have been found to be desirable for certain localities and for certain purposes. But as before stated the selection of varieties is a matter quite apart from our comments on the subject of marketing, and since so much has been written by others about the different varieties of peaches and so little has been offered of an intelligent nature about proper and profitable selling, we may well feel satisfied to treat alone on that phase of the question.

To begin with the fruit in the orchard we are at the beginning of the main problem of successful marketing. And by this I mean peaches ready for gathering and shipping.

Unless fruit is picked at the right time and in just the right way the task of selling profitably is greatly complicated. Unless good judgment is exercised in this essential particular it is merely luck if good results in the way of prices are obtained. So it need cause little surprise if otherwise perfectly developed and colored fruit is sacrificed through carelessness in picking, or by not being packed and shipped under proper conditions.

Therefore, I feel that picking and packing are matters concerning which a few words will not come amiss at this juncture.

About the picking of peaches a few general suggestions will suffice. When peaches show good color, good size and are well filled out and can be broken from the stem without much effort, they are ready to pick.

If allowed to remain on the tree until they will drop at the slightest touch they are too ripe to pack for shipment. An orchard must be gone over at least three or four times if the work is to be well done. Don't pick too green—this mistake is almost as fatal as waiting until too ripe. About the last touch nature supplies is the fine flavor. If picked too early much of this is lost. The green side of the peach must begin to show the rich tinge of yellow beneath the fuzz, but must still be hard and solid to the touch.

The ideal method is to pick every tree daily. This is perhaps not practical or possible in a very large orchard. Work as nearly up to the ideal as you can; proper picking is important. Don't allow any rough, careless handling, either before or after packing; strive to pack so fruit will show up well in crate. The prospective purchaser is quickly attracted by a neat package of showy fruit, it catches his eye first—then his money, while an untidy, sloppy package of same general quality of fruit is passed by as undesirable. Remember when packing your peaches that you are competing with thousands of other people in the same line. Strive to make your pack so attractive that it will sell first when it reaches the market.

Even with the good demand there is likely to be for peaches every season, some fruit is sent to market that will not sell except at very low prices by reason of careless handling and general unattractiveness. Fill the crates full of good attractive fruit; half filled or slack filled packages won't sell.

The same general common sense rules as to grading should be religiously followed. Extra choice or fancy and choice should be the only two grades for sending to market,—anything else should be dried or sold to canners, to jelly makers, cider mills or else fed to stock.

The grades I refer to suggest themselves readily. If an extra choice grade is to be put up only the finest and best fruit is to be selected and it should run uniform through the entire package so that a brand can be built up and those who have used the same fruit before will inquire for the same pack again. The importance of this asset is too little considered by growers and shippers, for if a pack or brand is established and the grade maintained it is easy to get a premium over prevailing prices for common fruit that will pay for the extra pains.

Choice should be choice, and not a layer of good fruit on top and the balance made up of half wormy or defective stuff below. The fruit is not choice if not sound and reasonably uniform in size and ripeness. Do not put green peaches in with those half or two thirds ripe and expect the commission man will be able to remedy your mistake. No use talk-

ing about his fooling the buyers to whom he may try to sell for they know as much about fruit as he does, and they both know more about it from a selling point of view than the man who grew it. If growers could only understand this fact and act accordingly they would save themselves and the commission men a lot of worry. On any market you will find buyers scurrying up and down the line, and you may be sure they look carefully over stock in perhaps a dozen places before buying. Now and then a "sucker" comes along, but most of the buyers are not of this type and the more intelligent growers know it is not profitable to cater to such trade. Nor is it desirable to cater to the cheap class of trade. The main thing is to produce a good quality and pack in nice style, true to grade, and you will find your returns will bear out my statement that it pays.

Packages for peaches is one of the main features in their successful marketing and is indeed a subject that would justify extended comment. There are baskets holding a bushel, a half bushel, a peck and a fifth, and I am sorry to say a "sixth," which is too often intended to be a skimp fifth.

In the crate we find the six basket carrier and the four basket carrier, commonly known to the trade as "sixes" and "fours." About the only box used to any extent is the flat shape California box holding two layers, containing from 32 to 54 peaches in each layer. This is the favorite package in the far west, especially for a long haul to market.

As to the relative merit of the various kinds of packages we need pay little heed as they are perhaps best adapted to their various uses. The baskets have much in their favor if properly packed, but in the larger sizes, bushels and halves, they must be handled carefully. No matter how they are put up they seem to need repacking, facing and filling up when they reach their destination. A dressy appearance in a package cannot be overestimated. Too often the sale of a car of baskets is spoiled for no other reason than the poor appearance of the packages. It is found a good plan by some shippers to put some extra baskets into the cars when loaded and when the peaches are ready to be put on sale the fruit is simply transferred from one basket to another, usually just poured out, and when the process is completed it is found several of the extra baskets will be required and you have also secured better prices.

This is not necessary in the case of the smaller baskets for it would be too much trouble to take off the tarlatan and little or no advantage would be gained anyway by repacking, for they are usually packed tight and show practically no shrinkage. I refer, of course, to the fifths and sixths.





A MISSOURI PEACH PACKING SHED





STYLE OF PEACH PACKING AND PACKAGES USED AT KOSHKONONG, MISSOURI

The crates share about the same popularity with possibly the "six" a slight favorite in most markets. The six basket carrier is distinctly a Georgia product and will be used I suppose as long as the famous Elberta holds its place in public favor. This elongated crate with three baskets below and three above is too well known to require any description. The fours or "flats" are bully, provided the sides are not slanting like tomato crates. It is impossible to get these slanting sides to carry well as the fruit in the bottom gets mashed, and once a peach is mashed or bruised you know what happens, not only to the aforesaid peach, but to others in the same package, and also in other packages. Many people are prejudiced against using the four basket carrier of any kind because of the unpleasant memories they have of the "slanting" side kind with a top about 4 or 5 inches wider than the bottom. But after all is said some markets and some dealers hold the "fours" in high esteem and declare it to be the best for their purposes.

The flat box is no doubt best for western peaches.

When the peach deal is subjected to every test for results it is no exception to the general rules laid down in preceding chapters about all kinds of produce so far as uncertainty goes. From a marketing standpoint, assuming good fruit and proper packing, it is nearly altogether a matter of favorable weather and proper transportation. If peaches have had good weather, especially during the ripening period, and are fixed up and shipped promptly they should sell well in some market which can nearly always be reached on a rate that will pay to use to market the fruit.

And the converse of this holds true. Bad weather over night will frequently knock the most flattering prospects in the head in less time than it takes to tell about it; and then poor railroad or boat service, or rotten refrigeration as we sometimes see and hear of absolutely precludes successful handling.

But most of the trouble with transportation can be remedied by making preparations far enough in advance, and every grower or association official should see to it that a few weeks before the time for active shipping comes around that due notice be given to the proper officials who will then have a better opportunity to supply proper equipment and make arrangements to take care of the business that will be necessary to handle. In cases where an abnormally big crop is in sight plans should be laid 6 or 8 weeks ahead.

I say this will help in a large measure to offset the troubles we frequently hear so much about. But now and then it happens that no agency apparently can prevent losses to shippers because of inadequate

shipping facilities. Yet as a general thing the railroads should be held to account for their failure or negligence to give the service reasonably expected of them. Once they find they will be sued and compelled to make good losses caused by failure to do their part as required by law it usually is easy enough for them to arrange to take care of their shipping.

And why shouldn't the force of the law be used if proper service can not be had otherwise? If there is any one branch of the fruit business that is entitled to be called "peaches and cream" for the transportation interests it is the handling of the peach crop every year. Compare the peach rates with other kinds of fruits and consider the volume of traffic for certain lines, and you can easily figure out the enormous revenue they derive from the prosaic peach. What a tidy sum is \$100 to \$200 and even more a car on several thousand cars of peaches. It makes no difference if the fruit is consigned or sold f. o. b. it remains clear that the people in the trade who handle the fruit must foot the bills. Therefore, let the people who are spending this money get the best service and the proper value in return.

Some of the railroad people contend that since the price of fruit charged consumers includes the item of transportation it should be of little importance to the trade whether the rate is 50 cents or \$1 a hundred. That is one way of looking at it. But the more sensible view is to use every effort to reduce the cost of peaches and everything else to the consumer and induce him to use more of this delicious fruit and other kinds too. It is quite a feature in the matter of successful marketing to have a line of high priced stuff that will not move as it should for no other reason but that it is just a little higher than it should be for the public to take hold freely. Nearly always too high a transportation charge against peaches is assessed when we figure what the public will pay for the fruit and use it so as to keep it going into consumption as it should at the right time.

Some time ago the author was in conversation with a pioneer peach grower, a man who has made considerable money out of the business in his time, and the writer asked him if there were any hard and fast rules or useful suggestions he could give which might be included in this chapter.

"Yes, tell 'em to work hard, pray constantly and spray often," said he with no further show of interest. It needs little further comment. If growers are to make a success of peach raising they want to do their part in the best possible shape. Having produced a good article of fruit they can safely turn it over to a reliable dealer in any one of a score

of markets and sell for a nice price,—one that will yield them a fair profit on their investment of time and money in developing their orchards.

In closing I want to say a few words about canning factories as an adjunct to marketing peaches. The factory certainly has its place, and it should be run profitably, utilizing undergrades especially, but it is a mistake to suppose that only inferior stock can be canned with a nice profit. There are times when the canning factory offers better inducements than any other outlet. When these circumstances arise it is only common sense to use the factory. But when everybody begins to load up the canners and forget bare markets will re-act it is a good idea to sleep with one eye open on the markets which have scant supplies. Where there are sufficient supplies growers might well arrange to own their canning factories.

Possibly the least said about peach rot and specking in transit the better, for some growers seem not to have learned that peaches which they saw loaded and knew to be good when they last saw them really reach destination in poor shape. But the peach is one of the most delicate kinds of fruit; with too much moisture it goes down quickly, and once a car of peaches begins to speck it is generally a case of getting out with as small loss as possible, and prospective profits nearly always are lost sight of.

It is a safe bet on an average that the intelligent peach grower who aims to put up an honest pack makes some money season in and season out on his venture. But that class of undesirable citizens who will top their fruit off in any shape so as to make a sale and stick somebody, and who are too lazy to take proper care of their orchards, are a drawback to successful growing and marketing and are entitled to little profit and less sympathy for their so called hard luck. But they are in a minority, I am glad to say, as they are dying off.

Long may the luscious Elberta, the delicious Crawford, the tasty Smock and the hundred and one other good varieties continue to grow in popular favor, and may the faithful, if not too rich buyers, who go against buying them every season win out at least as many times as they have lost money.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### PINEAPPLES, PEARS, PRUNES AND PECANS

In the preparation of any volume or treatise of a technical character it is often the misfortune of an author that he is confronted with a peculiar circumstance in that he has in mind a subject he feels he should say something about but frequently lacks a proper opportunity. In other words, it is sometimes difficult to follow the usual lines of division or demarcation which would logically determine under what caption certain comments or suggestions should come.

Therefore, he must resort to some other convenience for treating matters of this kind when a subject hardly warrants a chapter, and that is just what we shall have to do in this instance. Our convenience in this chapter will be alliteration. About the only similarity existing in the subjects which are included in this division lies in the fact that they all are spelled by beginning with the same letter. Naturally, some critics will point to this as a weakness, but in treating a subject like the produce business which is so largely made up of this, that and the other it is hoped that the breach of form may be overlooked to some extent at least. At any rate, we shall try to avoid a pot pourri.

Taking up the articles in the order they are named there are a few comments and suggestions I want to make, and which I trust will not be considered out of place in this chapter.

With reference to pineapples there is not a great deal from a marketing standpoint which can be set down here, but at the same time there are one or two features about their marketing which the author deems this volume should contain.

The rapid development of the pineapple industry in Cuba and in the Hawaiian Islands has been largely responsible for an entire change in the alignment in the American markets. The Florida crop, always of chief importance to our domestic markets, has certainly felt the inroads of the foreign fruit, for many people who had heretofore come

to regard the pineapple strictly from the standpoint of a Florida product have been forced to yield to the pressure of this imported fruit and to witness changes which they little dreamt a few years ago would ever come about.

What tends to complicate matters more than ever with respect to foreign pineapples is the fact that both Cuba and the Hawaiian Islands are wards of the United States, and it would seem that a strange political situation has been indirectly responsible for the unexpected and uninvited advent of the foreign fruit into our American markets. Those interested in the pineapple trade both from a growing and selling standpoint have already awakened to the fact that they are confronted by a really serious situation, and while there is no prospect of immediate danger to the Florida pineapple industry, still we should bear in mind that this foreign production is of comparatively recent date. Why may we not look forward to further inroads upon the domestic industry caused by a rapidly increased production in these foreign countries which have fallen somewhat accidentally under the care of our national government?

The author admits quite readily that from the standpoint of an increased production prices generally should be lower to the consumer which might be expected as a logical result, and which should mean a wider and more general distribution of this fruit. But we should remember that it does not necessarily follow we are better off when we are distributing more pineapples at lower prices. The question is easily a debatable one, and attention is only directed to it with a view to awakening interest without prejudicing the reader one way or the other.

From the strictly marketing standpoint of pineapples there is not room to say a great deal, for the matter of grading and packing has been worked out on what appears to be satisfactory lines to all concerned. Aside from the usurious transportation charges on Florida pineapples, and the slow, antiquated system of getting the fruit on board vessels in Cuba we might reserve our space for better purposes.

With respect to the rate on Florida pines it does not require a traffic expert to see that a grave injustice is being done to the growers and shippers from that state, and to a casual observer it will appear that some remedy will have to be applied soon. The rate is simply outrageous and, in the estimation of expert traffic men, if it is ever properly attacked it will have to be revised and lowered.

As regards Cuban pineapples there need be little expressed beyond a regret that this country is cursed with the common laziness peculiar to the tropics, and what might otherwise be good fruit if properly

handled and promptly shipped, is frequently only of fair quality when it is put on sale in our markets after having been hauled from the fields by an ox team, driven by a sleepy native, who moves, thinks and lives obsessed in a creed whose watchword is *mayana*.

Some have expressed the opinion that one day there will be enough Americans in Cuba entirely to handle the pineapple business and everything else as we do things in this country, but others less optimistic fear that when enough of our people go over there to accomplish this they will catch the fever and be as lazy as the natives themselves. May-be so.

Now in regard to pears, the second item of our subject, there is so much to be said which will not likely be of more than passing importance except to those actually engaged in the commercial growing or marketing of this fruit, and which would be of a strictly technical character that would not properly come within our scope, we shall have to confine ourselves to a few general remarks on the subject.

Pears are produced practically all over the United States, and although we have ample supplies on an average with a normal crop in the present number of orchards, it would be hard to say what would happen if the blight had not become so widespread some years ago as to completely discourage growers in many sections and cause them to cut out their trees. Perhaps this has little to do with our present thought except as an indication of what the future production is likely to be with the big increase recently in many districts where pear culture has been found profitable, and which has resulted in bringing the growing of this fruit into popular favor again.

Beginning with Georgia in the south and extending all the way north along the Atlantic seaboard we find a number of extensive orchards, while in the central west and along the Pacific coast there has been a tremendous increase the past few years in the number of trees put out which is evidenced in the heavy shipments coming on the markets every year from the last named territory.

Undoubtedly the Bartlett is a prime favorite in central and eastern territory, and because of its success in most localities it is perhaps entitled to rank as the national favorite. In the far west there are several varieties cultivated extensively, with the Anjou probably bearing the palm so far as prices are concerned.

From a marketing standpoint the pear conforms roughly to the same conditions under which other fruits are grown, packed and sold.

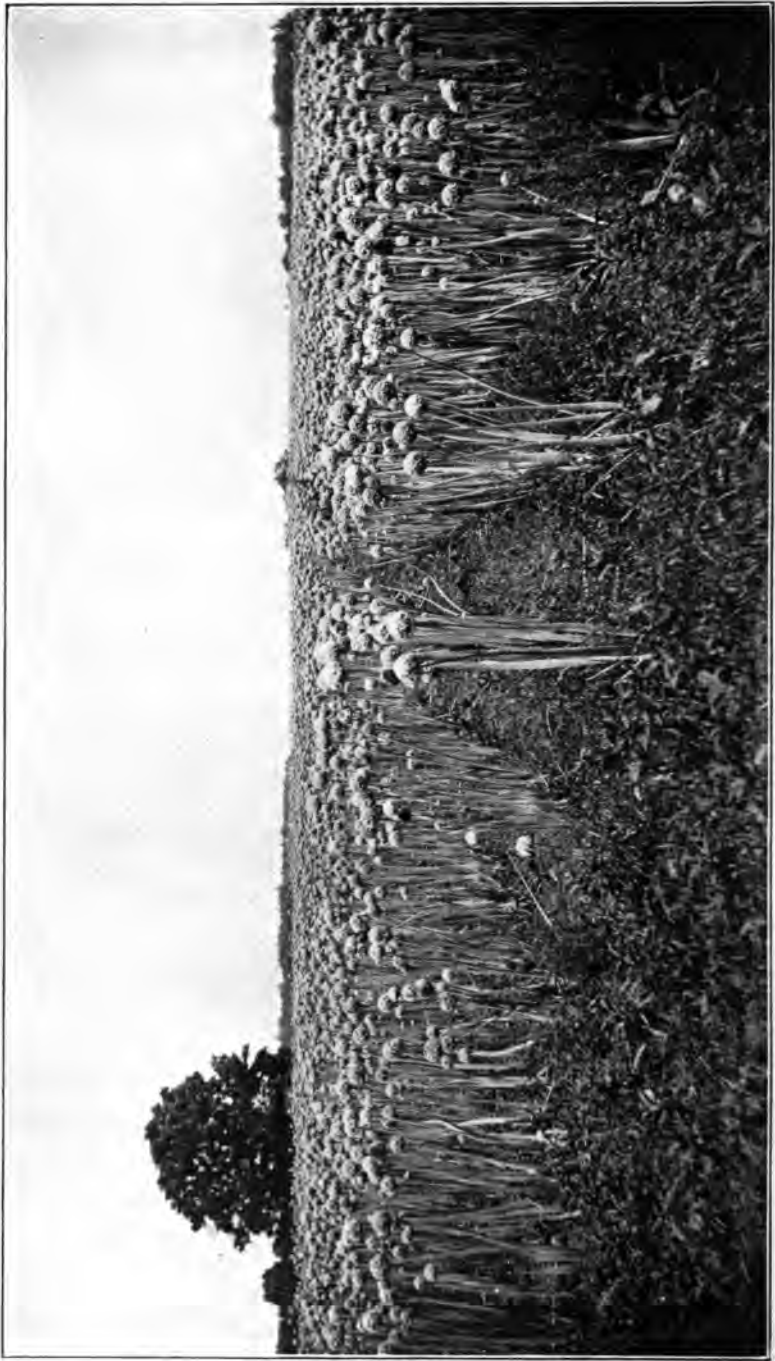
Prunes may be considered under two heads, domestic and foreign. The Italian prune has been imported to some extent, but of recent





PINEAPPLES JUST AS THEY GROW AT MIAMI, FLORIDA





A TEN ACRE ONION SEED FARM IN INDIANA

years the heavy production in this country which is mostly confined to the Pacific coast has to a large extent put the foreign prune out of business. Pacific coast growers have made wonderful progress the past few years in the cultivation of this fruit. The industry has now reached the point where enormous sums of money are involved, and from present indications there is every reason to believe that within the near future the production of prunes in this country will be more than doubled. Thousands of new orchards are coming into bearing in the Pacific Coast territory, and those engaged in the fruit business will, no doubt, hear a great deal more about the importance of the prune industry in this country than we have been accustomed to in the past.

There are no special comments with reference to the packing, grading and shipping of prunes that occur to the writer to be of sufficient importance to require more than a bit of comment in this connection. What has been said in preceding chapters regarding grading and packing of other fruits applies with equal emphasis to prunes and, no doubt, some improvements over the present system of grading and packing will be adopted as the volume of business dictates changes which should be made to accommodate a wider distribution and a freer consumption of this fruit.

So far as the quality of prunes is concerned there is no question but the American grown fruit equals, in most essential points, that produced in Italy, or in any other country for that matter.

Dried prunes already constitute a considerable item in the fruit traffic of this country, and the general tendency appears to be to throw as much of the fruit into this channel as possible though, as everybody knows, there is a tremendous traffic in the green fruit every season.

One thing, however, which ought to be mentioned in connection with the prune industry is the fact that a large proportion of our American population is gravitating towards the cities and towns; of course, when people are huddled together under conditions such as most of them live in the larger cities it means that the boarding houses and the cheaper restaurants will have an opportunity to keep alive the time-worn joke regarding "boarding house" prunes.

There is no question but prunes will always hold their popularity as a cheap dessert, and there is every reason to believe that this old boarding house wheeze will be kept alive for years to come. At any rate, the energetic growers in the West will spare no pains to see that a sufficient amount of fruit is supplied if the boarding houses and the restaurant keepers will do their full duty. And it might be added that a worse article could be selected as a cheap dessert than prunes, which

are served in such tasty fashion by most of the boarding houses and cheaper restaurants at the present time.

Regarding the pecan industry, there are several very interesting points which ought to be dwelt upon, but anything like a full treatise would require a separate volume, as the industry has become so important the past few years that it is almost impossible to do justice to the pecan business in a short amount of reading matter such as we shall have to confine ourselves to in this connection.

For the past few years we have seen an enormous traffic in pecans from Texas, Mississippi, Georgia and other southern and southwestern states. It is estimated that several hundred thousand bushels of pecans are marketed every season from the territory referred to, and many new groves have been set during the past few years. In view of the fact that the pecan tree is of long life and that many of the old orchards which were set out forty or fifty years ago are now producing a full crop, it has been pointed out by some that there is a probability of overdoing the production of pecans sometime in the near future. But the writer takes an opposite view of the matter because the pecan is growing in popularity, and more and more of these nuts are being used every season.

One thing that has always stood in the way of a free consumption of pecans is the fact that this nut is one of the most difficult of all commercial varieties to get into eatable shape. But since two or three very ingenious devices have been perfected for shelling pecans it would appear that the main difficulty on this score has been done away with. For a very small sum housewives can now procure one of these machines and hull more pecans in a few minutes than a whole family could formerly shell in a whole evening.

Then again, the system of polishing these nuts has reached such a state of perfection that they can be put in attractive shape so that they appeal to consumers much more quickly than formerly.

In Texas, where the industry is of perhaps greater importance and extent than in any other state, more attention has been given to the matter of polishing and a very fine grade of commercial nut is produced there. However, some very excellent specimens are sent out from Georgia and Mississippi, and upon the whole, it would seem that every care is being given to the matter of appearance, for growers are coming to realize that appearance is one of the main features in the successful marketing of pecans as well as all other kinds of nuts and produce.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### TRUCK GROWERS AND TRUCK

Perhaps some special reference should be made to the class of people listed among growers who produce different kinds of vegetables or truck, and it will not be amiss to have some specific remarks in passing regarding these people, and also to the different commodities which are usually listed under truck, which latter word is somewhat like charity, for it covers a multitude of produce sins if, indeed, sins can be used synonymously with the raft of different kinds of vegetables that run the entire gamut in quality, color and market values.

Primarily, truck growers are understood to be those who cultivate small tracts and generally follow an intensive system of producing fruits and vegetables for the larger markets. According to the general acceptance of the term, these growers reside near towns or cities, but we have come to realize that there is no important connection between the residence of the truck grower and his following.

Practically the same mode of living and methods of operation are followed nowadays by truck growers whether they reside nearer the large market centers or happen to be following their calling in newly settled territory. And it is not our purpose in this connection to try to characterize the truck grower further than we have in the first chapter in which we have attempted to define the different components of the great produce trade. It is merely with a view to leading up to something else that we refer to the truck grower again because it is necessary to get a line on him in order to classify intelligently some of the commodities which are usually listed as truck, and which will more properly include under a common head the references we have to make to the different kinds of vegetables embraced in that category of articles.

As a matter of fact, among a large element of people, both in and out of the trade, the term "truck" is used to include practically everything in the fruit and vegetable line which comes on the market in small

quantities, and which may or may not be hawked around the streets in pushcarts or sold from wagons, or even peddled by the small dealers on foot. Were it required to make up any list of these articles we might simply prepare a brief list of the common vegetables and let it go at that, but since it is not our purpose merely to furnish lists, it is obvious that we shall want to look into the matter in a little broader light.

We shall perhaps offer some suggestions regarding the various commodities which may be listed as truck, and which under other conditions assume entirely different aspects from the usual acceptation of what the truck business implies.

Such vegetables as celery, cauliflower, cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, beans, lettuce, radishes, turnips, mushrooms, asparagus, spinach, endive, kohlrabi, escarol, shallots, watercress, artichokes, etc., may properly be classed as truck, and the term is perhaps suited for ordinary requirements in designating these and other similar articles. At the time all of these commodities were made to come under the common head it is quite probable that the word "truck" was very well employed to cover them, and also to suggest something of the methods under which most truck commodities were handled.

But as we have seen the development of the business, and the many new conditions that have arisen which have thrown an entirely different aspect over the methods of growing and marketing the various commodities we have just referred to, it is quite evident that many of them cease to be truck in any sense of the word, but on the contrary reach proportions which almost make a separate business within themselves, at least, for some of the commodities mentioned.

Take celery for instance. Those who are at all familiar with the produce business will hardly be disposed to consider that vegetable as being truck in any sense of the word because the business, under modern methods of producing and distributing, has assumed an importance in the vegetable realm not only in one section or in one market, but practically in half a dozen sections and all of the leading markets in the country as being a specialty almost within itself. As a matter of fact, there are several large organizations whose chief concern is the producing or distributing of celery on a wholesale plan, and it is a matter of common knowledge among the trade that there are several produce concerns in various markets who enjoy an excellent financial rating and whose chief source of revenue in the building up of the substantial fortunes they represent has been nothing more or less than the specialty they have made of celery. Mind you, we are merely referring to celery in this connection to illustrate the possibility of successful specializing in some of these erstwhile truck items.

But while we are on the subject we had as well go into it a little further and advance some ideas which may be of interest to those out of the trade who may have this volume for reference, and which also may be of some benefit to those in the trade.

In a commercial way, celery is now produced in four or five states on a commercial scale which makes it of prime importance. The annual output of celery in California, Florida, Michigan, New York, Louisiana, Colorado and perhaps one or two other states is an item that takes rank with the leading vegetables grown. Sales range from 10c to 50c a bunch, and \$3 to \$5 a crate according to supply.

California, of course, exceeds any of the states referred to both as to volume and value of the celery grown. In one or two districts in California it is the chief industry for a large proportion of the people who are engaged in growing vegetables of any kind, and the annual shipments from that state under normal conditions will run a thousand cars or more. Celery growing has easily become an industry within itself in parts of California, and the same might be said of the Kalamazoo district in Michigan, while the output of celery from the Sanford, Florida section makes celery growing the chief occupation of many people in that territory.

So far as the grading, packing and handling of celery is concerned we shall have little to say because it appears that the methods adopted for marketing the product grown in different localities are perhaps about the best that can be devised for the particular sections involved. For certain markets and trade requirements celery should be bunched, of course, while for certain other trade the vegetable is taken best in the rough and without being washed. Growers generally have made a careful study of these requirements and seem to have complied in practically all of the essentials necessary to market their output on the most favorable terms.

But on the other hand, improvements can be made, both in the bleaching and the packing of celery from different localities, and without question further progress will be noted in the handling of celery as well as the producing and packing of it. It has been demonstrated over and over again that a premium always can be had for stock that is nicely bleached and properly put up in attractive packages, and the premium is quite enough to induce growers to go to the extra pains of getting their shipments in the best possible shape before sending to market.

Cauliflower is another article which assumes considerable importance in the realm of truck or vegetables. This vegetable is produced quite extensively in California, and also in Colorado and New York state,

principally on Long Island. Of course, we find it grown in practically all parts of the country, and more or less of it comes on the market early every year from various Southern shipping points.

Beginning in the spring of the year quite a little cauliflower is shipped from Southern sections in barrels or large crates, and sells usually around \$1 to \$2.50 a dozen on the Northern markets. But during this same time shipments are usually coming freely from California, and in the fall of the year the principal supply is obtained in the East, mostly from New York. At certain seasons and from different localities car lot shipments are moved freely day after day. During the summer the markets are generally flooded with it and it sells at a low price.

Cucumbers are one of the leading vegetable items not only from the standpoint of a general production, but also from the volume of business handled every season. Cukes, as they are commonly known, are grown in practically every state in the Union, either in the open air or in hot-houses. They come practically every market day and in every conceivable package from the extreme long cukes from the hothouses in boxes to those of the short pickle variety in boxes or hampers, and run a great range in the matter of price and quality. Hothouse cukes from Boston and other Eastern points are usually available after the first or second week in January and the same applies to cucumbers produced in hot-houses in Illinois, Michigan and other Western territory and also from Louisiana, while cucumbers grown in the open air begin coming from Southern shipping points in March and April and continue liberally until carlots move from Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, with prices ranging all the way from 25c to 75c a dozen at the time when most of them are shipping in heavy quantities during the spring and summer up to as high as \$2 to \$3 per bushel crate or box during the winter when they are scarcest.

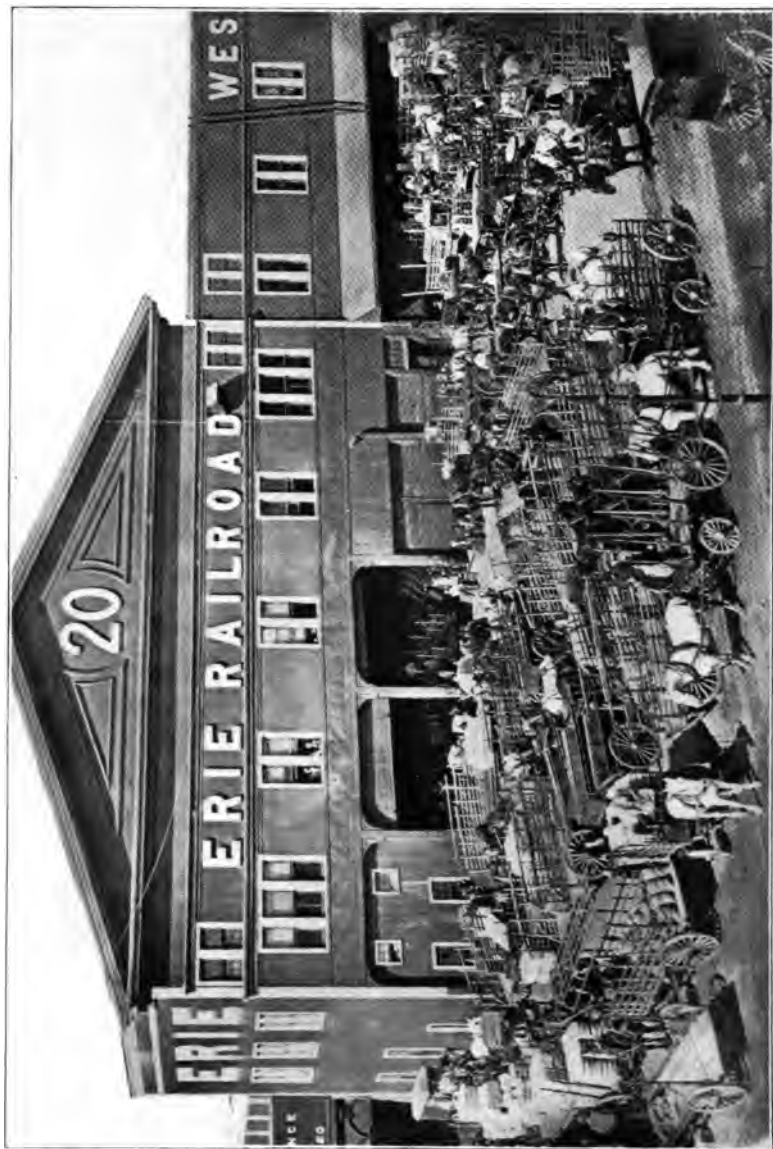
The most extensively cultivated variety of cukes throughout the country is the White Spine, but it is not considered generally so good for shipping purposes as the Long Green which stands transportation better and also holds up for a longer period of time. But for pickling the smaller varieties are mostly used.

Tomatoes are now produced in commercial quantities in probably half of the states in Union. Beginning early in the year shipments are coming forward from Mexico, California, Florida and later from Louisiana and Texas. About the middle of January the first car lots are ready to move, and the supply gradually increases until in March and April when the market is usually down to a decline from \$2 to \$3 per crate for the first shipments to as low as 25c to 50c when the heavy movement



PACKING "BUNCH CROPS" AT KENNER, LOUISIANA





EXTERIOR VIEW OF ERIE RAILROAD FRUIT PIER AT FOOT OF DUANE ST., NEW YORK  
TRUCKS WAITING TO CARRY AWAY THE DAY'S SALE OF FRUITS

is under way. As the season grows on home grown tomatoes from various localities supply practically all the large Northern markets, and there is little or no demand except for canning purposes for outside shipments.

A favorite package for tomatoes is the six and the four basket crate with the latter kind probably in stronger favor with the trade in most markets throughout the country. Generally speaking, the Acme variety is the leading favorite for commercial purposes, while there are some other tomatoes that are perhaps just as rich or even richer in food value than the Acme and are more desirable for home consumption.

Lettuce is easily one of the most important vegetables grown and marketed today. Shipments begin coming from Southern points during the fall and winter and continue from some parts of the country practically every month in the year. There are occasions when head lettuce is scarce, and good stock practically has no limit as to the price it will bring, having sold up as high as \$12 and \$15 per bushel hamper for nice quality on several occasions during the past few years. But it generally happens that the market is caught bare of any stock, and these prices only prevail for a few days at a time. Still it seems that during the fall and winter periods there is generally a shortage of nice head lettuce; crops which fill in these gaps usually sell at figures which net handsome profits for the growers. Beginning in the spring of the year barrels sell all the way from \$2 to \$5 according to quality and market supply. Florida, Louisiana and Texas points open the game, and later on shipments come from practically every direction until the home grown stock supplies the markets. Of course, hothouse lettuce is also to be had during the winter, but as this stock is principally of the leafy kind there is not much competition with the trade which demands the head lettuce. During the fall and early winter quite a lot of fine lettuce is shipped from York state which is distributed in all parts of the country in a car lot way, or even in large express lots when markets do not justify car lot shipments. Some sections on the Pacific coast also ship some very nice fall and winter stock.

The squash is another vegetable which comes properly under the list we are considering. Shipments are coming steadily during the spring and early summer from Southern shipping points, and practically all Northern markets are well supplied with the different varieties. Florida points usually begin shipping first, and bushel boxes generally sell all the way from \$1 to \$2 in most leading markets. Good, sound stock, either white or yellow, usually nets good prices, and while shipments are wanted mostly in a small way, still practically all stuff coming that is of desirable quality meets with ready sale at some price.

String beans occupy an important place in the list of vegetables, and are usually in demand every month in the year in most markets. Shipments begin coming from Florida, Louisiana and Texas points early in the year, and are followed with liberal supplies from different states as the season progresses. Florida and Texas shipments are frequently found in the Northern markets around the holidays, while New Orleans beans are looked for usually around the first of January, and not later than the first or second week in January. Sales depend entirely on quality and supply, usually running from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per bushel box.

Radishes, when nice, sound and of desirable size, usually meet ready sale throughout the entire season. Southern shipments, of course, begin early in the year and supplies increase as the season grows on. Texas and Louisiana barrels sell according to quality from \$2 to \$5 per barrel, while the hothouse varieties range anywhere from 15 to 50c per dozen bunches.

Turnips, very largely consumed nowadays, are grown all over the country, and the round or long variety can be had from all shipping districts at some time during the year. They usually sell for about carrying charges in most markets during the heavy season of the spring and summer. The yellow variety grows principally in Canada and Michigan, while some parts of Wisconsin are now producing more or less of this stock. These turnips, more generally known as rutabagas, are marketed during the winter, and are of large size. They usually go in car lots from the sections mentioned to all parts of the country. From observing the system employed in handling these rutabagas I think their consumption could be greatly increased by adopting better methods of selling. More of them should go direct to smaller markets.

There are several other minor vegetables which are grown in almost every section and are available in season, such as spinach, endive, kohlrabi, brussels sprouts, watercress, shallots, artichokes, escarol, parsley, beets, gumbo, green peas, peppers, kale, rhubarb, carrots, sweet corn, etc., etc. which are to be had in greater or less quantities as market conditions justify.

However, there are occasions when some of these commodities cannot be bought in the markets for various reasons such as climatic changes and unfavorable weather. It is the case on such occasions that extreme prices prevail for a limited time, generally until supplies can be had from other sections, for be it known that the output of vegetables season in and season out outruns the actual demand, and when extreme prices are being realized in most markets it can be set down as a safe proposition that the territory which usually supplies the market in question

has suffered some extreme weather condition which has cut off the production, or temporarily held back the crop which should supply the market where extreme prices are prevailing. It is mostly a matter of proper shipping facilities and favorable rates that determines most of the vegetable supply for any market nowadays.

The fortunes of the truck grower are variable; his life is usually a picturesque one. From a small plat of a quarter or a half acre he is likely to make a great cleanup once in five years or even oftener, but what is more likely to happen is that he will run along making a fair competence from his two or three acres of highly fertilized and well tilled ground which is usually looked after by himself personally, and with the assistance of his family frequently at certain stages of the game when he is busiest with harvesting and marketing.

One thing that the truck grower has to be thankful for is the spread of the new doctrine over the country relative to a vegetable diet being the most desirable for the average American citizen. This new cult has been responsible for an enormous increase in the consumptive requirements of different kinds of vegetables during the past few years.

Thousands and thousands of packages of different kinds of truck, which perhaps would not otherwise have been so much in demand, have been taken annually by most of the leading markets of late years in excess of previous requirements, and no doubt the big increase in the eating of vegetables has been due largely to the preaching of this new vegetable cult which aims to influence people to forego the eating of meat and substitute on the daily bill of fare more fruits and vegetables. If a plan could be arranged for the truck growers to contribute to the raising of a fund to build a monument to the man who started this new creed they might well get together a substantial sum to show their appreciation for the benefit they have received indirectly through this doctrine that has aimed to put the American public on a vegetable diet.

The writer has recently been asked if it was not his opinion that the production of vegetables of different kinds is likely to outrun the actual consumptive requirements. In answer here he would say that in all probability some commodities are being grown in excess of the actual demands while it can hardly be denied that on an average most of the best vegetables produced are consumed by the public at some price. Frequently concessions have to be made in ruling prices in order to move certain kinds of vegetables which have accumulated and have to be sold because of the fact they would become worthless if not disposed of immediately.

There is no way of telling, it seems what commodities will sell at good prices a year ahead or even a few months before the time actually comes for disposing of them, but by a careful study of market conditions and with an experienced produce man in some of the leading markets advising with growers, it generally is the case that some intelligent opinion can be formed as to what the prospects are for a given truck commodity from one season to another.

Naturally, when growers find that one commodity is being produced in too large quantities the logical thing to do is to switch to some other commodity or else cut down their acreage so as not to throw too much of the given article on the market. This is a matter which can be very well taken up by individual growers in one locality with growers in another section, or even through their associations with other associations of vegetable growers. It will be found generally that dealers and commission men will co-operate heartily in matters of this kind. The better element in the produce trade aims to co-operate with growers in deciding upon what crops are best to grow. Sometimes they have wrong ideas, but usually it is best to counsel with your commission man before planting extensively.

The truck grower and his truck are of such varied nature and great importance that he might rightly be treated more fully instead of in a limited chapter as we must do in this instance.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### PRODUCE EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

Should the author undertake to go into a thorough discussion of the matter of produce exports and imports it is not at all improbable that he would consume a great deal more of the average reader's time than is at all desirable for our purposes in this connection.

Besides, we should be forced to a consideration of the tariff, and a discussion of a matter of that sort is thoroughly out of line with our aims in this volume. It suffices to say, however, that the tariff now in effect and all previous schedules have exerted a tremendous influence on the amount of business we have handled, especially of an import nature, while the contrary holds true with regard to schedules in effect in other countries in so far as our exports are concerned.

Practically every man connected with exporting or importing different articles of produce or other food products will bear out the author in saying that tariff schedules are no less an important factor in handling business than the actual prevailing market conditions themselves in the different countries from which food products are imported or to which export shipments may be sent. Before leaving the subject of the tariff, however, it is only fair to say that no ideal schedule has ever yet been worked out, and in all probability never will be, which will satisfy even approximately those concerned in the producing or distributing departments, if we may be permitted to refer to the different interests in this way.

The tariff that is considered best for the producer is frequently objected to by the distributor, while practically all schedules are objected to by the consumer. Perhaps there was never a greater truism uttered than the statement made by some Solomon of the political game years ago that the tariff, after all is said and done, is purely a local issue.

Our discussion of this matter of produce exports and imports must necessarily be of a brief nature, for the space allotted to this subject

will not permit more than a cursory glance at some of the more salient features connected with what we send out of this country and what we bring in from other countries. There are some points which strike the writer as being of more importance than a discussion of market values or prices, and it should be understood that what we take up for consideration will be more in the nature of the general than the specific. In other words, we are not concerned so much with prices as with the principles which underlie them.

The export end of our business is limited mainly because of the excellent domestic markets to be found in one section or another of our own country for practically everything we grow and have to put on the market from any given locality. It might almost be said that our export business is merely intended to take care of what little surplus we may have from time to time. When we come to think of the matter carefully, we soon find that about all that amounts to a hill of beans in our export trade is the apple business and what exports we handle in dairy products.

Of course, we are treating the matter purely from the standpoint of the fruit and produce business, and the total valuation of the apples and dairy products from this country for a given season amounts to only a few million dollars. In other words, for every dollar we get from foreign countries for the food products we send them, we cough up several hundred—maybe several thousand—dollars in buying little dukes and earls and other things for the daughters of our idle rich to play with, and apparently to furnish themes for sensational stories in the Sunday papers and magazines a few years after we have imported the aforesaid little dukes and earls.

As regards apple exports it may be safely stated that the figures run anywhere from one to four million barrels and from a half million to two million boxes, reckoning on the government's schedule, and the principal part of both barrels and boxes is taken by the United Kingdom going mainly to Liverpool, London and Glasgow.

It is purely a question of crop conditions in this country and prevailing market prices abroad as to what movement of apples we have in any given year. In this country we have witnessed a continued increase in the production, and several years ago it was generally believed that a much heavier export business would result as the increase in production developed in this country, but it seems that our best markets have been where they were at that time, that is, in our own country. There have been times, to be sure, when there were more apples than our domestic trade required and on such occasions it was only logical that

fruit should be exported, especially when we could get better prices abroad. But as before stated, we are coming to find that this export business is of less and less importance as compared with the enormous domestic trade which we have developed and which is still constantly increasing in our own country.

Now what applies to the export business in apples may be said roughly to correspond with the conditions in the dairy products trade also. We send abroad quite a little butter and cheese every year, yet we must not overlook the fact that where we send products of this nature abroad we are constantly using a greatly increased amount in our own country. A brief survey of the government figures on the subject for the past ten or twenty years will quickly convince the impartial investigator that, taken as a whole, the export business is a mere bagatelle compared with the enormous volume of trade in our domestic markets. Even the banner year of 1906 with nearly 25,000,000 pounds of butter shipped abroad, valued at about four and a half million dollars, and around 20,000,000 pounds of cheese valued at about two and a half million dollars, is really a small factor in the dairy products business when we stop to think of the tremendous traffic in these products in our own country.

The fact of the matter is, for the past few years we have had little or no surplus to speak of in dairy products and it has been a case of utilizing every source of production to the utmost in order to secure enough supplies to take care of our own consumptive wants. At prices lately prevailing for butter fat there has certainly been a slim chance for anything like a profitable business on a basis of prices prevailing in foreign markets. What the conditions of the future will be as regards dairy products no man is wise enough to predict with anything like reasonable accuracy, but it is the honest conviction of the writer that from the present "lay of the land" there is little hope of doing much more business in exporting dairy products within the near future at least, than we have had in the past. The foreign countries are simply not in position to stand the price our exporters would have to realize to bring up the volume of business to anything like respectable proportions. And it should be stated too that the great bulk of the export shipments are of undergrades which sell for less money than the average run of quality insisted upon by the consuming public in this country.

Now considering the matter of dairy products from an export standpoint, including dressed poultry, of course, it would be unfair to say that there has not been quite a profitable business transacted upon the whole by a number of operators who handle dressed poultry which is



sent abroad, more or less freely every year. Several million pounds of this poultry find favor annually in European markets and especially in the United Kingdom. Whatever opinions they may entertain of our system of handling packing house products abroad, it cannot be safely said that they fail to appreciate the toothsome fowls which are sent over so nicely packed, and at such reasonable prices compared with what they pay for the home grown kinds. Preparing this poultry for export might be said to be an industry within itself in the central West where a number of enterprising concerns have built up quite a large business in packing this kind of poultry, and where a well developed system has been evolved for handling the business. Yet this branch of the poultry trade is small indeed when we compare it with the domestic.

There is one thing connected with the export trade from this country that the writer considers of such importance as to be worthy of more than casual reference, and that is the matter of increase in business transacted of late years with Alaska. We are so accustomed to think of European countries when we speak of the export trade that we lose sight of the importance of the business done with our great big territory in the far Northwest which is far enough away to make it seem a foreign country.

Men familiar with the export business have been credited with the statement that Alaska is of more importance to us from the standpoint of an export market for food products than all the European markets combined. The fact that Alaska is a nonproducing country and yet has the money to pay for food products furnishes a clue for this condition of affairs. When it comes to the matter of comparing profits on products sent to Alaska with products taken by European markets we get another forceful illustration of the fact that the best market is the one that pays the best prices.

And what applies to Alaska may be said to apply also in a greater or less degree to the new Canal Zone, the Philippine Islands and also the Hawaiian Islands; and these new outlets are only good to the extent that they harbor American citizens, for be it understood that the American citizen, wherever he may be, whether it be along Broadway, in a Western mining camp or at the North pole usually insists on getting something that suits him and he manages somehow to find the price to pay for it. Unfortunately this cannot be said of many of the buyers in European countries; sad to relate, the majority of people who would like to trade with us abroad are unable to pay prices that would justify us in sending our products abroad to them.



BANANA ROOM SHOWING METHOD OF HANGING BUNCHES IN TIERS FROM THE CEILING  
FOR RIPENING



LOADING APPLES FOR EXPORT—BARRELS ARE TRANSFERRED TO STEAMERS

While we are discussing the matter of nearby export markets we must not lose sight of Canada. Now as a matter of fact, any good Canadian will spend hours in trying to convince you that they can grow anything across the border that we can on this side, and furthermore, they can produce just a little bit better quality than we have. Yet at the same time, the figures show that many of the Canadian markets use a respectable proportion of our products and while it may be a fact, as some prejudiced individuals seem to believe, that the Canadian trade takes only what they have to from the United States, we must not forget that the sum total of this trade cuts an important figure in our annual reckonings of the fruit and produce business, and the sum total exceeds greatly the goods we buy from Canada. It is especially important to the big jobbing houses located in states along the border in certain favored localities. The business has reached such importance that several concerns have established branches on the Canadian side; and now that reciprocity is so nearly accomplished we may look for a much larger trade in the future.

This applies especially to the Northwest, and here again we have an illustration of the point we called attention to in speaking of Alaska and other parts of the country that have been settled up largely by our Yankees. There has been such a tremendous influx of farmers and business men from the United States into the British Northwest that the section in question is even more typical of the United States than of Canada itself. Big profits in growing wheat and live stock have furnished a basis for high prices for different kinds of fruits and produce which the Yankee palate craves and which is usually satisfied if the pocketbook will justify.

Considering imports of fruits and produce we have hardly more than four or five commodities that amount to enough to speak of. Bananas from Central America and Jamaica, lemons from Italy and onions from the Bermuda Islands constitute the principal items. Of course, we get a few fruits from far-away South Africa, plenty of cocoanuts from South America, some nuts from Italy, dates from Syria and Turkey with a sprinkling of fancy vegetables from Belgium and nuts from Spain and Italy, not to say anything about those very excellent grapes and onions which come from Spain, with now and then a few potatoes from Germany and England and cabbage from Holland and Denmark on rare occasions.

If the writer were asked to sum up in a few words what constitutes the limit on imports of this character he would say that this limit is determined purely as to the amount of a given product that they dare

send over to us. That is, on a basis of supply and demand in this country, which is more or less regulated by the home production, assuming, of course, that there is some product produced in this country which competes in a measure with the product from abroad.

Yet in all fairness we should say that we have not yet produced a lemon that can compete, everything considered, with the Italian lemon. The several million boxes which are brought into this country every year are no doubt following the natural trend of the market, for were it possible to supply the trade with our own production it is hardly necessary to state that the industry would reach proportions in this country which would preclude the movement of such a heavy traffic from abroad. The same may also be said to apply to Bermuda onions, while Spanish onions and grapes have the best kind of excuses for finding their way into this country to the extent they do and bringing the prices usually prevailing during their limited season.

But the biggest item in the matter of imports is bananas. A fair size volume and quite a good story, indeed, could be written on the subject of banana importation. The author wonders why somebody has not undertaken the job. True, excerpts are found here and there and some writers of stories have unraveled an edge, while another has touched upon another edge, but nobody has gone to the trouble of developing the theme as it should be handled and making a good story from the mass of material available.

It is an enormous business, this banana trade; it involves millions of money; it has had a rapid development in the last quarter of a century. According to some reports which bear the earmarks of authenticity it has had its share in the making and the unmaking of some of those blackguard comedians who have assumed to start revolutions and overthrow the existing order of things in Central America. Little do we dream when we see a bunch of bananas hanging in front of a retail grocery store, or lying complacently in the pushcart of the picturesque Italian street vender, that within its folds may lie a slumbering tarantula, and at the same time the part and parcel of a theme which, if properly dramatized, would thrill the American public from the humblest to the highest.

The story connected with the banana deal has all of the essential elements of a good drama: Love, intrigue, war, wealth and poverty, all of these and perhaps there are some more which could be analyzed in this great game. There are said to be romances interwoven with the financial affairs of the banana trust that are worthy of a good playwright's handling.

Twenty-five years ago we were hardly using five million bunches of bananas; nowadays we are consuming more than ten times this amount. It is also reported on good authority that the consumption in Great Britain has more than trebled during the past five years. Quite a big business is also handled with markets in Germany, France and other European countries.

While we are mainly interested in considering the banana from the standpoint of an import, at the same time it is both an import and export business as we look at it, for the business is practically dominated all over the civilized world by one immense Yankee corporation that practically holds the business in the palm of its hand, operating steamship lines, vast plantations in Costa Rica and in other growing sections, and having practically all of the best trade in the world sewed up so far as supplies are concerned. It is estimated that four-fifths of the bananas brought into this country are directly or indirectly controlled by this immense enterprise. As a matter of fact, the business has been developed from little or nothing to the present enormous proportions by the enterprising heads of this big corporation. They taught the public to eat bananas. They promulgated the doctrine that the banana combines the essential food products in such a way as to make them most easily assimilated even by the dyspeptic, and by discovering new methods of transportation, developing new markets and nursing the business carefully we now see a leviathan in the fruit realm which has sprung from what some people were so silly as to call a "pushcart" proposition years ago when the business of importing bananas was in its infancy. But when the dare devil methods of developing the industry are finally given to the world we shall all stand aghast at the means used in bringing about conditions as we now find them.

Some definite idea can be had of the very satisfactory profits resulting to the trust for its trouble when we consider the figures which are contained in the annual statements of this big concern.

Prices in Central America run from 31c per bunch for sizes of nine hands or over and 25c for eights. The company gets an average of \$1.70 a bunch, averaging from 150 to 175 bananas, in this country.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE COST OF LIVING

During the past few years the increased cost of living in this country has caused a great deal of thinking among our people, and because of the fact that considerably more than one half of the money received by the average wage earner is spent for eatables, it may not be out of place to have some comment on this subject. At any rate, I have some things in mind which I am persuaded to believe will be worth the perusal of those not connected with the produce business who may read this book, and at the same time I believe that those people in the trade who may not have given any thought to the subject will do well to consider carefully some of the things to which I am calling attention.

Whenever we begin making comparisons on the subject of the high cost of living it may not be a bad plan to stop and think of the cost of high living in this country, for the American people in my judgment are the greatest spendthrifts on God's footstool. I am firmly convinced of the fact that most of our people have a sort of mania for blowing in money on some sort of proposition, and it generally happens that if the money is not spent for one thing it is spent for something else. We must have the finest of everything. Your American gentleman and American lady, and mind you they are all ladies in this country, must have the best of everything obtainable.

Fine dresses and clothing of all kinds, fine automobiles, fine diamonds, fine wines, fine cigars, in short, fine everything except in the realm of mental operations, may not have so much to do with the high cost of eatables, but it occurs to me that there is a close connection between the increased cost for food supplies of all kinds and the other forms of extravagance which we see on nearly every hand.

While food products have gone up in value, let's not lose sight of the fact that everything else has advanced also. The world's gold supply has increased wonderfully during the last decade. Whether this is

right or proper I shall not attempt to say. I merely call attention to the conditions as they exist without attempting to justify them at all. But the fact cannot be gainsaid that the American people as a whole demand the best of everything and, generally speaking, if they have got the money to buy they insist on having the best. This can only lead to one result: Paying the extra price for the extra quality. And if they have the money and the disposition to spend it you can rest assured they will get what they want.

There has been considerable silly talk here and there, sometimes in state legislatures, sometimes even in the halls of Congress, with reference to a cold storage trust, or some kind of trust in the produce business which has forced eatables higher. To those who have even a passing acquaintance with practical produce affairs, this kind of stuff is scarcely a low grade of comedy. As a matter of fact, there never has been and in all probability never will be such a thing as a produce trust. Conditions are so changeable and fortunes are so variable in this game, as we have pointed out in preceding chapters, it would seem practically beyond the pale of human possibility to effect anything like a trust, or even anything like an effective working agreement, which would last for any length of time, and which could result ultimately in changing prices either one way or the other. This I think we have made pretty clear in treating several subjects in preceding chapters, and I only refer to it here because some who may read this chapter may not have had the patience or felt sufficient interest in the book to have gone over the entire subject matter up to this point.

People in and out of the produce trade have pointed out that the system of handling business generally adopted by retail grocers throughout the country is in a large measure responsible for the big increases which are found to exist today for all kinds of eatables compared with several years ago. And I incline to believe that there is a great deal of reason in some of these statements, for I have done some investigating along these lines myself. I think no one who has looked into the subject will deny that in many cases retail grocers and others selling at retail do extort prices from consumers which are little short of downright robbery when compared with profits others get who have probably done more work and had considerably more money invested in the commodity in question, considering the proportionate profit they could hope to get out of a given commodity.

These retailers' profits frequently run anywhere from 25 per cent to 300 per cent or more. But when we approach the retailers on the subject we invariably get from them a very pitiable story detailing



the experiences they have and relating the small profits made on their business as a whole. They will tell you that they are carrying numbers of the different advertised articles such as breakfast foods, canned goods, etc., on a scandalously low margin because the manufacturers tell them they have spent fabulous sums of money in advertising these articles and creating a demand among consumers. The manufacturer probably figures that the retailer must handle these lines on a basis of something like one quarter per cent commission or profit, and since there has been a public demand created for the commodity the retailer is almost forced to carry it in stock.

When we stop to figure that these advertised articles constitute a considerable portion of the average grocer's stock we easily see that this very factor of advertising must have a vital bearing on the profits that the retailer has to figure on getting out of the articles which are not advertised, for he must get a certain profit out of the business he handles in order to pay his expenses and have anything left for himself.

It is not my purpose in this connection to object to advertising any article intended to be put into general consumption, but at the same time we must look the matter squarely in the face, and it is my honest belief that there is a whole lot in the claim that fruits and produce of all kinds, which are handled in bulk, and which are not susceptible to being advertised, are made to carry the cost of operating to a large extent that ought to be borne by the different advertised articles which are sold by the retailers on a very small margin of profit. And if you are disposed to doubt this proposition I would respectfully suggest that you do some investigating on your account and some impartial figuring before you give out an interview, if you are interested in some of the advertised brands, attempting to show that I am a crazy agitator.

Another thing that I want to point out is the system adopted in nearly all of our large cities for the delivery of groceries from the corner store to the consumer whether he lives in a house or in an apartment building. In the average home the woman for "convenience" usually resorts to the telephone to do her buying, and of course the packages ordered have to be delivered. This delivery service in itself is no small item in increasing the cost of the different articles. In an interesting series of articles published in one of the magazines a year or two ago it was pointed out and some very sensible reasons were set forth, as well as tables of authentic figures, showing that the actual cost of cutting up and delivering a pound of steak from a butcher shop or retail grocery in a residence district of one of the large cities to some customer three or four blocks away, costs considerably more than the



IRRIGATING A CALIFORNIA ORANGE GROVE



PACKING PEACHES AT JACKSONVILLE, TEXAS

money necessary to handle the same meat from the ranch where the beef was put into condition for marketing, and to carry it all the way through the different ramifications of being shipped and prepared for delivery to the aforesaid butcher shop or retail grocery store. This is probably true with respect to many eatables in the way of fruits and produce. There are some funny things when we come to figure out the different factors that enter into the cost of handling any kind of food products. The actual deterioration and loss in a retailer's stock is quite an item.

Personally, I am not disposed to make faces so much at the retail grocer or at any other retailers. I think as a general proposition they are not making more money than they are entitled to, considering the work they do, the capital invested in their business, and the risk they must take in carrying their customers. We rarely hear of these retailers taking up any bond issues which are open to the public, nor as a general proposition do we see them buying more automobiles than anyone else; among all of them I have known I must say that a small percentage of them seem to wear more diamonds or fine clothes than any of the balance of our people.

Of course, the average retailer is in business simply to make money. There is no use quibbling on that point, or asking any questions as to why a certain grocer got a lease on a certain corner. He is merely human; he is trying to get all of the profit in sight. I think he is wrong, I am speaking generally of the average grocer, in trying to hold up prices as long as he often does after prices for certain commodities have declined. But if we put ourselves in the place of the retailer we would probably look at the matter just as he does.

Generally speaking, the retail buyer looks to the wholesaler or to the jobber who supplies him with what he buys to keep him informed as to market conditions. But the wholesaler or jobber takes the same advantage of him nearly always that the retailer does of the consumer. In other words, the man who is selling the retailer wants to get all he can from him, and if the wholesaler thinks that apples will be lower in the course of a few days you can rest assured that the retailer will be about the last man the wholesaler will inform of the opinion he has. To put it another way, he would not object to loading up the retailer with a lot of apples if the retailer has the money to buy and is susceptible. And when the market breaks it is not hard for us to see what the retailer will do, or at least will try to do. He is going to try to get his money out of those apples and a profit too if he can. And what is true of apples, mind you, applies all along the line to the hundred

and one different articles which the retailer must buy from day to day, or at least from week to week. The rule of trade is *caveat emptor* whether among wholesalers or retailers.

It occurs to me that if some scheme could be devised to keep consumers informed as to the actual conditions existing in the market for different kinds of foodstuffs, and even likely to exist in the future, it would be the means of helping people generally to meet conditions with less embarrassment than sometimes happens. I think it would be possible for the daily papers and the magazines to secure this information and have it prepared in such form as would be intelligible and interesting to the average reader who might be concerned in having the facts correctly put before him. It is easy to see that if the average housewife had advance information that potatoes, for example, would likely rule higher than the average price by reason of a shortage in the supply she could better trim her sails to meet the situation than she could without knowing of the probable advance that would take place two or three months or even further ahead.

What I have in mind is something analogous to the service rendered by the United States government in the weather maps provided and the warnings sent out from time to time with reference to changes in the weather. These warnings do not make the rain come down to be sure, but if it is going to rain we are put on notice of that fact and can provide a raincoat or an umbrella before the showers or storms come and the damage has been done by our being caught unawares.

I think our people as a whole should give more careful study to this matter of probable cost of living several months ahead. If some commodity is likely to sell higher or lower it does no harm to let the public know about it. By this I mean to say that it is just as well that the information be given to the public with reference to the probable supply, and let the public draw their own conclusions with reference to the probable trend in market values. Surely anyone who would undertake to forecast markets several months ahead would probably do more harm than good if he ever got to the point that he would enjoy the confidence of the public to the extent that people would believe what he had to say on the subject.

Give the people as nearly correct information as is available with reference to the probable supplies to be had of a given commodity during a given season, and let them reason out things. It could do no serious harm, I am sure. This matter of providing supplies for the household is really a serious proposition for a majority of our people. I mean those of moderate means,—the big majority. As the matter



stands now, the average consumer takes his chances from day to day, buying piece-meal, when in many cases he could probably offset a change in the market one way or the other if he had sufficient information upon which to base a conclusion as to what the market might do the day after, the week after or the month after.

In place of asking the question over and over again why the cost of living has gone up, I would prefer to ask the question why does not the cost of living go down? Yet, as a general proposition, I don't believe that such articles as are embraced in the fruit and produce line are much higher proportionately than any other article generally used by the public, if we consider them all relatively on something like a ten year average. After all is said and done our people as a whole are largely to blame for the alleged high cost of living.

The few retailers here and there who may be guilty of charging exorbitant prices would no doubt find it a difficult matter to get in their slick work if most of their women customers had as much interest in going shopping to buy the household supplies as they do in following the bargain sales where trinkets such as phony jewelry, complexion powders, and rats to go in their hair, can all be found at marked-down prices, which are perhaps twice as much as they are really worth on the open market.

Personally, I regret to see the passing of the time when it was customary to go marketing, and I really think there were advantages connected with that system which can hardly be had under any other. It certainly made everyone take an interest in the home which is lacking under the present system. In some of our older cities it was quite customary in years gone by to see some of our leading citizens visit the large retail markets with their baskets, and spend an hour perhaps in selecting supplies for the Sunday dinner. Having made their selections, the packages were delivered, or were even taken back in their carriages to their homes. To me it seems that this gave a sort of personal touch which is lost in the present mechanical system of using the telephone and getting a lot of second-hand canned goods and a nondescript aggregation products that no one but a grocery clerk would select for a good American citizen to include in a Sunday dinner.

There has been a whole lot said with respect to co-operative schemes for supplying fruits and produce to the consumer at a wonderful saving. These fellows can talk your arm off telling about the usurious profits exacted by the middlemen, and all of that. In theory the proposition is very pretty, but in actual practice it does not work out. It will probably take an entire shaking up of human nature ever to put such a

scheme into operation, and I do not hesitate to say in so many words that I have no confidence in it whatever. The plan is impossible, at least until the millennium shall have come. Consumers should think twice before putting their money into these schemes. Honest co-operation to a reasonable extent is good, but so much fraud is mixed up with most schemes of this sort they are safe to let alone.

When there has been a bit more thinking and considerably less complaining about the cost of living compared with several years ago I believe the matter will tend to adjust itself, and we shall all get along better.

Whatever we do let's not confuse the cost of high living with the alleged high cost of living. The two are quite different. A little sober thinking about ourselves will convince most of us we could dispense with many things we foolishly buy and eat. We need more plain living and high thinking.









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